The Genius of Christ

William H. Crawshaw

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THE GENIUS OF CHRIST

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A STUDY OF JESUS CHRIST AS A MAN OF GENIUS

BY

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"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou."
—*Tennyson's "In Memoriam."*

THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY
440 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
1917

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
My Mother
Mary Lodge Crawshaw

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January 7, 1840—December 8, 1916

Because from thee I learned of Him
  Whose service made thy life rejoice
  His name is mingled with thy voice
Till all earth's memories grow dim.

If any love or faith may be,
  If any virtue, any praise,
  Or visions deepening all my days,
'Tis from my twilight prayer with thee—

"Our Father"—words whose meanings are—
  Though lightly lisped with childish breath—
  Beyond the lowest deeps of death
Or gleam of night's remotest star.

If e'er I strive with doubts and fears
  Or find my wandering footsteps stray
  Beyond the strait and narrow way,
Thy voice again is in my ears.

If e'er I grapple with the dread
  Of mysteries hard to understand,
  The benediction of thy hand
Once more is laid upon my head.

When twilight bids me cease to roam
  And like a child I long for rest,
  Wilt thou not fold me to thy breast
Again as evening brings me home?

Wilt thou not lead me to the place
  Where 'mid green pastures and the calm
  Still waters of the Shepherd's Psalm
Thou dost behold Him face to face?

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE highest human is nearest to the divine. Let it not, then, seem strange to think of Christ as a man of genius or to find by this road another way of approach toward knowledge of the Son of God. If the thought be unworthy of him, he will forgive the human weakness which ventures to declare it. If it be reverent and just and true, may it be one more acceptable tribute to his glory. Each new ground for wonder should be new ground for faith. "By each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet." Confident at least of his intention to promote and not to hinder such aspiration of the religious nature, the author would be glad if the ideas of this book should commend themselves to the open-minded consideration of those who love and revere "the Master." W. H. C.

Hamilton, N. Y.,
March, 1917.

THE GENIUS OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTORY

WHAT men shall think of Christ is a matter of exceptional and singular moment. It is important for the sake of the truth itself—the truth of history and the truth of religion. It is important because the world could not in any case afford to misconceive such a great and influential personality. It is important further because of its great practical bearing on faith and conduct. Men's lives are largely shaped by their ideal of Christ. The character and the fate even of nations and races has been and will be determined by their conception of him. Civilization itself is influenced for good or for ill by its interpretation of his personality. Men need to know concerning him not what ideal is most traditional, most imposing, most poetic, most sublime, but what ideal is most nearly true. They cannot afford to cherish an ideal which is false or misleading. They cannot afford to have any false thought or to hear any false word concerning him. They cannot afford to follow any wrong path in seeking to find him out. Such con-

True Ideal of Christ Important

siderations—among many others—spring to the mind in proposing to study and to discuss the genius of Christ. That the idea is an unfamiliar one need not deter us. What really matters is whether the idea is true, whether it is consistent with the best that men of wisdom and insight have been able to see in him, whether it is justified by the actual records of his life and his words. It is after all to these, and not to any traditional conception, that the appeal must be made.

A Clear Historic Figure

Jesus of Nazareth is probably the most clearly delineated of all historic figures—the most distinct and lifelike and familiar. The story of his life which is unfolded in the four Gospels presents him to the imagination with all the features of a genuine living man, clearly seen and sharply realized. Each of these separate records is a marvel of simple and impressive and picturesque recital, revealing the central figure in a peculiar light and from a particular point of view. Taken together, they combine to furnish manifold illustration of a character as real as it is unique. No biography has ever portrayed more vividly the salient outlines of a great personality. The character thus presented has an extraordinary charm and exerts an enduring fascination upon all who come within its influence. It commands attention and interest, it wins affection and admiration. The impression which it leaves is that of a greatness at once majestic and simple. Here, we feel, is the picture of

one who was very truly a man but who must ever hold a commanding eminence among his fellows. His manhood invites us to measure him by human standards; his evident superiority to ordinary men tempts us to compare him with those exceptional and illustrious human beings whom we call men of genius.

A Figure of Mystery

In spite of the vivid reality with which it is presented, the figure of Christ is forever a figure of mystery. The lifelike picture is drawn by men who saw him clearly and who were profoundly stirred by his presence but who did not altogether comprehend the great character which they portrayed. They have made him seem real and near, but they have not altogether made clear what manner of man he was. They suggest depths in his character which they do not fathom. He is mysterious because of his human greatness; he is still more mysterious because of his claims to a superhuman and divine nature. The significance of that great and unique personality has been a problem for all the ages since. To the world's best thought and insight, it has seemed to disclose something of its hidden meaning, but not yet has any one been bold enough to suppose that the final word has been said. The height and depth of that character has not yet been explored, and the mystery of the divine in the human yet lies shrouded in darkness. In the presence of that mystery, may we still venture to speak of the human genius of Christ—as though

that might help us to some truer insight into his real nature? The answer depends upon which of two great paths is likely to lead to the truest and fullest knowledge of Christ.

The old familiar path has been the path of the mystic. It begins with faith, and leaving behind it the lowly ground of fact and reason, seeks to mount at once into the clouds. For many centuries the mystic ideal of Christ ruled the minds of his followers, or at least the minds of those who were capable of religious fervor and spiritual insight and to whom Christ was something more than the meaningless object of a formal and traditional worship. It seems strange that the clear and definite picture of Christ presented in the Gospels could ever have been obscured or distorted, but it is not altogether unnatural. The mystical tendency is strong in human nature and the fervor of religious emotion has a powerful effect upon the imagination. The character of Christ was great and mysterious and was vitally associated with what is profoundest in thought and feeling and experience. The Middle Ages, during which the mystic ideal grew up, were ages of intense faith but of meagre knowledge and small historic sense. Men's minds were impressed almost exclusively with the single thought of Christ's divinity and were absorbed in the effort to realize that. They strove to evolve for themselves a conception of a divine being in human form. They found the task

The Mystic Christ

difficult, and in the eagerness of their effort they were impelled toward the way of religious ecstasy and fervid imagination. Instead of calling to their aid the picture of the human Christ, they seemed to feel that they must somehow escape from the clear and definite idea of Christ as man in order to behold the mystic vision of Christ as God. Jesus of Nazareth became a figure viewed through the luminous mist of religious emotion, colored and distorted by the ecclesiastical tradition of many centuries. Their Christ was essentially a mythical and mystical character. Seeing the divine side of his personality so vividly, it did not occur to them that his human nature might after all be no mere external thing to be put on and off like a garment as he passed from one scene of action to another, but a real and essential part of his character as it is known to men, affording the medium through which the deeper mystery of his divine nature might in some measure be understood. The result was that the original picture had grown dim to their eyes and that they had substituted for it an idealized conception of their own.

The Mystic Method

Such a Christ could be approached only through the method of the mystic and the quietist, the way illustrated by such holy devotees as Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Theresa, elaborated and explained in that wonderful book of Thomas à Kempis, "De Imitatione Christi." The divine perfections were to be "imitated"

through meditation and fasting and prayer, not through the flesh but in spite of the flesh, by quenching all natural desire, by subduing the body and severing so far as possible the bonds that hold men to the world. The monk's cell, the hermit's cave, the pillar of self-torture, offered the arena in which the superhuman effort was to be made. Suffering and martyrdom were to be welcomed as means toward the attainment of the spiritual end. Perhaps, through laceration of the flesh and the subjugation of all human instincts, there might come at last the supernatural vision, the divine stigmata, the flaming heart, the perfection of sainthood. If only everything earthly could be lost sight of and man could cease to be man, he might hope to attain the goal of his fervid desire —the "imitation of Christ." The world was a place of evil and sorrow, the life of the body a painful necessity to be endured. The spiritual life was the only reality, and the divine pattern in Christ could be apprehended only by way of intuition and immediate vision of spiritual truth.

There was power in this ideal, there was beauty in it, there was truth in it. Even its perverted asceticism was heroic and served to emphasize the dominion of the spirit over the flesh.

Power of Mysticism

In every age, the church was not without her witnesses to the power and the reality of the life hid with Christ in God. The mystic ideal represents the fine flower of

medieval religious thought and aspiration and experience; but its fragrance is still sweet and its beauty still fresh. It could hardly have been the inspiring ideal of the Middle Ages unless it were in some sense an inspiring ideal for all ages. The ideal is not quite our ideal. It was not born in our time, and it is not informed by our spirit. Yet it is drawn from springs so deep in our common human nature that it in some degree represents our religious instincts and appeals to our religious feeling. The ideal still persists because the mystical spirit still persists. It probably always will persist—if not as a living reality, at least as a beautiful tradition.

Mysticism is powerful and permanent because it represents one side of religious truth. Its weakness lies in the fact that it represents only one side while professing to represent the whole. It taught man that in order to live in one part of his life he must sacrifice the other. The mystical spirit is necessary to humanity; but it is also dangerous, for it may induce an undue contempt of the body and the mind and lead toward the delusive goal of mere religious ecstasy. A mystical conception of Christ is not sufficient for human needs. Christ was not a mere abstract of qualities and attributes and virtues; he was a personality. If men would be like him, they must first know what he really was. They cannot hope to realize his character by the mere action of imagination inspired by religious

Limitations of Mysticism

emotion. The mystical ideal is open to the further objection that it tends to cultivate a life artificial and aloof—in a word, the life of the monastery rather than the life of the ordinary world which is open to all men and women and not merely to the select few. We need a principle of life for more than the cloister. Christ was not a monk. John the Baptist came as an ascetic; but Christ came "eating and drinking." Each had his place and his mission. "Wisdom is justified of all her children." The larger life, however, was that of the Master and not that of the forerunner. "Monasticism," it has been said, "was a confession on the part of Christianity of being beaten by the world." Christ said, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Men have gradually turned away from the one-sidedness of monasticism and from the unreality of the conception on which it was based. They have felt the need of something else—and something more. Through the influence of many intellectual and spiritual forces, the world has come to hold another ideal —that man may live the truest life through the harmonious development of all the parts of his human nature. The old conception has gradually faded away and has lost its power over the mind and the heart. The mystic still lives, but he is no longer the mystic of the cloister and the cell, of the hair shirt and the scourge.

It is clear that the way of the saints and the mystics has led to a fanciful and arbitrary con-

ception of Christ and also to a fatally narrow interpretation of human life. It is equally clear that this path is no thoroughfare for mere human knowledge and intelligence seeking an understanding of the personality of Christ from the starting-point of fact and reason. There is, however, another path, at once more natural and more simple—the path of historic interpretation. Difficult as it may be to fathom the depths of Christ's character or to penetrate the inner mystery of his nature, there would really seem to be only this one safe way. How can we begin to know what Christ was except as we study his human life and his historic character? Where can we discover these except in the marvelously vivid portrayal of his personality in the four Gospels? If we seek to know and to imitate a mystic Christ, we may be pursuing a mere phantom of religious imagination. If we could really discover the Christ of history, we should find the mystic Christ so far as he has a genuine existence. Men must first pore upon the historic picture until its lineaments are ineffaceably impressed upon their minds and hearts—seeking to behold the human Christ as the evangelists saw him and portrayed him. Is not this the method suggested by the Gospels themselves? For what else was the picture given? For what else was it made so human and so life-like? Surely we cannot go astray by first seeking to realize the living person of Christ just as he

Historic Interpretation

appeared to his disciples and companions. Then it is necessary, with such clearness and insight as men may command, to ponder the deeper significance of this portrayal until it has disclosed something of its hidden meanings. So far as men may come in this way to a just and true conception of the Son of man, they will have reached the only safe ground from which they may endeavor—with perhaps something of the spiritual fervor and insight of the mystic—to rise toward the realization of the Son of God. If the divine Christ is to be found anywhere, he is to be found in and through the human Christ. Was it not by some such process that the disciples came to know their Master? Their Christ was the very Christ which the evangelists have portrayed. They saw first the clear and distinct features of the man and vividly realized him as a human personality. Then, through daily companionship with him as he really was in the flesh, they came to fuller understanding of his unique character. They did not comprehend him perfectly, but they saw enough to enable them to understand that he was more and other than they. Through the medium of his humanity, they came to a belief in his divinity. It was a belief that impressed others without their circle and led even the indifferent watchers at the cross to pay their involuntary tribute, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

Whatever conception of Christ may result from such a method of approach should at least have

solidity and reality. The mind may not be able to travel so far by this road, but it may travel on firmer ground and in the right direction. The ideal of Christ which it conceives will not be a mystic ideal, although it may involve all that is valid in mysticism. Christ will be seen at first as very truly a man, possessing all the essential qualities of humanity and linking himself thus with other men in a common human brotherhood. As a man, he will have his own peculiar personal character—that particular mingling of common human qualities which will mark him as an individual personality, like and yet unlike his fellows. So far as these qualities are seen to be great and noble, so far as he surpasses other men in power and in goodness, he will be exalted in human estimation. If he is seen to be superior to all other men in his manifestation of human excellencies and virtues, he will stand at the summit of humanity—the world's ideal man. If he be indeed found perfect in his human nature and if he be felt to possess powers and qualities which pass beyond the limits set for all other men, then the mind will bow to his claim of embodying the divine in the human. It may not be able to comprehend the mystery, but it will yield homage to the fact. Coming to its conclusion by such a process, it will feel assured that it has not gone astray, that its faith is not based on any artificial conception or

The Human Christ

on any forced interpretation of Scripture, but on solid foundations of reason and fact.

Such a conception of Christ will involve a saner and more natural interpretation of human life. The approach to him will not be through any process of mystic exaltation, of separation from the world, of self-abnegation or self-torture, of suppressing the natural human instincts, but rather in such reasonable ways as may seem possible to men living the normal life of real human beings. In a word, the true arena of the religious life in its finest form will not be the monastery, but the broad field of the world. What, then, of the "imitation of Christ"? If not by the method of asceticism, yet in some larger sense and in some broader way is that still possible as an aspiration and a hope for men? Probably the truest answer is that the idea is really a misleading one, unless it is broadened so far as to become another and a different idea. Men cannot in any proper sense imitate Christ either in life or in character; but they can find spiritual inspiration in him and live their own individual lives in the same spirit which was the guiding principle of his life. This is more than a difference in terms. "Imitation" is a mechanical process of copying, as one might copy line by line the work of a great artist—and possibly miss its soul. The other idea implies the creation of one's own individual work under the inspiration of what is most vital in the greater work of the master.

The Inspiration of Christ

The "imitation of Christ" meant that men should cease to be men. Living under the inspiration of Christ will mean that they should become men in the fullest and completest sense by striving to become, each in his own way, "such men as he."

The human ideal of Christ appeals to the modern religious temper. It corresponds with the modern sense of reality. It harmonizes with the humanistic interest which is coming to be more and more surely the dominant note of our time. This modern conception—which nevertheless may be called the oldest of all conceptions—is not destructive but constructive, not merely negative but capable of positive and far-reaching suggestion. It has shown itself, not simply as one side of a great truth, but rather as the tangible and solid foundation upon which the structure of a lofty spiritual conception might be securely based. What limit, then, need be set to our study of Christ's humanity? If he is to be approached at all in this way and if such an approach has been found to lead to a fuller comprehension of his unique personality, it cannot be inconsistent with a true reverence or otherwise than helpful to the broadest appreciation of him to consider from a human point of view and in terms of human personality any traits of mind and character which we may fairly discover in the record of his life and his words. "He that hath seen me," said Christ, "hath seen the Father." The first step, then, is

Significance of Human Ideal

really to see Christ. We can see him only as man, for only in that shape does he become visible to human eyes and understandable by human minds. When we have succeeded in seeing him as man, we shall have begun to see whatever his life and personality have to reveal concerning the nature and the attributes of God. If this be the chosen mode of revelation, we cannot too diligently search out the truth of Christ's human nature.

If we approach Christ in the spirit of the mystic, it would savor of irreverence to speak of his genius, as it would to speak of his manliness. Either would seem like an attempt to draw him down from his divine height to the human level. If we approach him in the spirit of the searcher after historic truth—which is no other than the spirit of the Gospel narratives—his manliness seems a natural and a religious thought and the idea of his genius seems sooner or later inevitable. When we have pondered well and have taken into our minds and hearts the thought of Christ as possessing love, purity, courage, and all the other noblest qualities of common men, how shall we not be drawn to think of him as also possessing those rarer and finer attributes manifested by the great leaders of the race? Christ was "a man such as we are"; and to understand him on the side of his common humanity unfolds to us the conception of fellowship and brotherhood with him as sons of a common Father and inspires us with the desire to be "such men as he." But Christ was also

a man greater than we are—a man standing at the very summit of human greatness; and to understand him on this side of his exceptional humanity has also its own peculiar revelation concerning the mystery of his nature. He had the ordinary attributes of humanity, which he shared with common men; but he had also the transcendent powers and gifts by which humanity rises above itself and approaches nearest to the divine, and these he shared with the greatest and best of the race.

Christ a Transcendent Man

When human power becomes so great and original that we can account for it only as a kind of divine inspiration, we call it genius. If we discover in Christ the exhibition of a similar greatness and originality, why should we not seek reverently to contemplate this higher side of his human nature? Such an endeavor can only serve to exalt his name and lead us to a more complete understanding of his personality. It may also impress us with the conviction that these powers which are the glory of man emanate, like all other human powers, from the divine nature, and are a faint shadow of the working of the divine mind. Perhaps it may lead us to find unexpected depths of meaning in the conception that man is made in the image of God. It should certainly teach us that Christ is our brother through all the range of human experience and thought and activity—on

The Genius of Christ

the heights of human intelligence as well as on the common levels of human living and in the depths of human sorrow. Perhaps genius is only the exaltation and refinement of powers which are more or less common to all men; but if so, Christ possessed this exaltation and refinement, and is in a very true sense to be numbered among the men of genius who are thus the representatives of their fellows in the world's witenagemot. As we seek to know what are the qualities of true manhood, and then search the record of his life in order to see how these are illustrated in his every purpose and action, so we may ask what is implied by genius and in what sense and degree genius is manifested in the personality of Christ.

When we speak of Christ's manhood, we do not assume that he displayed absolutely every manly quality, but only such as are essential to the manly spirit. Likewise in the matter of genius, we need not assume that we shall find it displayed in every possible form, but only in its essential power and in such measure as was consistent with the purpose of his great mission. His manifestation of genius was not an end in itself, except as it served to show his possession of the higher qualities of human nature. In its details, it was purely incidental to the working out of a larger purpose and entirely subservient to the attainment of that purpose. It was determined by his own individual personality, as in the case of every

Christ's Genius Incidental

other man of genius, and perhaps still more by the immediate objects which he had in view. To most men, the possession of genius is a sufficient reason for spending all the energies of the being and using all the opportunities of the lifetime in cultivating that genius, in providing channels for its operation, and in realizing all its possibilities. To Christ, genius was simply an instrument for service, to be displayed only so far as it might be useful—along with other means—for accomplishing the tasks which were before him. That he possessed vastly more genius than he actually displayed, is quite possible. Such a personality could not well exhibit itself fully on any earthly arena, even in the fulfilment of such a mission as his. What we shall find is that he did exhibit those forms of genius which are primal and elemental and which include most of the really great results that genius has achieved in the world. Within the range of these, he chose the particular forms which were best adapted to his ends, showing powers and accomplishing results comparable with the very greatest in their kind. The fact that these exhibitions of genius were merely the incidental workings of his mind and personality increases our sense of their greatness and our sense of Christ's majestic powers. It does not, however, alter their character. They were manifestations of his human nature, essentially the same in their quality as other exhibitions of genius, and they justify the attempt to understand them and

to estimate their value by comparison with the best powers and achievements of other men of genius.

Genius is a familiar word; but like all other familiar words that aim to express great spiritual ideas, it baffles definition. Its general import is well understood; but no one can fully measure its content or unfold all of its implications. It conveys to the mind an idea of extraordinary power in the intellectual and spiritual realm, of remarkable capacity for some particular kind of achievement, of almost creative originality in its conceptions and methods, of surpassing excellence in its results. The fundamental meaning of the word suggests something inborn rather than acquired, something that is an integral part of the personality. It is also comparatively independent of education or special training and finds little guidance in precedent and authority. These may be helpful on the side of method and technical skill, but they cannot create genius and are at best but its useful and convenient servants. In its highest manifestations, it is a law unto itself and a maker of law for others. Guided apparently by an inward impulse, it knows its own way and finds in itself the sufficient justification for its processes. We think of it often as due to inspiration, and we embody our most familiar idea of it in the saying that a poet is born and not made.

Meaning of Genius

If we speak of genius as having something about it of the divine, may not our thought be

more literally true than is commonly supposed? The ordinary mind does things by formal and traditional method, by conscious effort, by painful and elaborate process. Genius does them with apparent ease, by natural instinct, by an intuition of the right way, with marvelous self-confidence, with fresh and individual effect. Whence comes this facility, this certainty, this boldness, this originality? How is it that the few are so different from their fellows that their works seem like a kind of magic? Is it unreasonable to suppose that genius is unconsciously more in harmony with the divine thought and that it has found instinctively the divine way? Its results are akin to the miraculous. Every great genius is a miracle-worker in his own particular field, not by transcending natural law, but by his unconscious and instinctive fellowship with natural law and his glad and eager obedience to that law. They work together—the man and the law—toward the miraculous ends which they "with blended might accomplish." Christ was the great worker of miracles, not because he exercised a superhuman and arbitrary power to overrule the common law of nature, but because he thought in the divine way and had the divine attitude toward all created things. There is a very true sense in which all men might work miracles if they were but sufficiently attuned to the divine mind and had the sympathy of the divine mind with nature.

Divine Quality in Genius

This sublimation and concentration of power which we call genius manifests itself in a great variety of ways. This multitudinous variety almost baffles comprehension; but it falls into something of order and convenience, and becomes vastly more significant, if we may regard the many individual forms as arranging themselves under certain great types or modes of genius, corresponding with certain great modes of activity of the human mind. Perhaps it would be impossible to suggest any such grouping which would be comprehensive and complete, but such completeness would not be necessary or even important for the present purpose. We are concerned only with those modes of genius which may seem to be illustrated in the person of Christ. Having discovered these, it will be our task to examine the nature and extent of that illustration.

Modes of Genius

Five great modes of genius suggest themselves as having more or less association with the personality of Christ: how far these go toward covering the whole possible field of genius may be left an open question. The first of these modes has to do with the activity of the thinking mind, as it moves discursively in the realm of pure intelligence: it is the genius for thought, for the origination and elaboration of ideas. The second mode has to do with the activity of the acquisitive mind, as it exercises itself in the gathering and classifying

Five Great Modes

and storing up of ideas and facts: it is the genius for knowledge, for learning. The third mode has to do with the mind in its creative activity, as it acts in conceiving the forms and symbols which are the embodiment of thought and feeling: it is the genius for expression in all its manifold varieties. The fourth mode has to do with the executive activity of the mind, as it plans the performance of effective deeds: it is the genius for action. The fifth mode has to do with the mind in the exercise of its intuitive faculty, as it seeks the immediate and instinctive perception of truth: it is the genius for spiritual insight, for religion.

The second of these modes, the genius for learning—very truly one of the possible varieties of genius, but doubtless the least of those here enumerated—need not be included in our present survey. Many illustrations might be given to show that Christ had the genius for knowledge; but it was at best only a subordinate feature of his general intellectual activity. In the accomplishment of his great mission, there was small need or opportunity for the display of human learning. This phase of his genius should not be entirely left out of account; but it will be sufficient if we regard it as merely incidental to his genius for thought. The other four modes of genius are very clearly manifested, and each of them will be further defined and distinguished as it is taken up for separate consideration. It will also be our task to

Modes Manifested by Christ

show the manner in which Christ displayed the fundamental and essential powers of each of these modes, while choosing his own particular methods within the scope of the general type. There is of course no implication that the general types are necessarily separate from each other in their actual manifestation. As a matter of fact, they often overlap each other in the works of many men of genius. Greatness in one mode is not infrequently accompanied by some degree of power in another, and different modes are mingled and interdependent with each other in their workings. One of the most significant facts about Christ is that in him many kinds of genius are blended together into a mighty harmony. Our further consideration will lead us to see the particular varieties of genius which are especially marked in him, the characteristic ways in which he illustrated these individual forms, and the relation which these several forms bear to their general types. The different varieties, like the different types, will be enumerated and discussed, not with any purpose of making a complete analysis of them, but only so far as it may be necessary to call each in question in order to arrive at a true and reverent appreciation of the Genius of Christ.

I

THE GENIUS FOR IDEAS

THERE is a mode of genius which may be called the genius of the discursive mind. It is the genius for thought, the genius for ideas. It produces the thinker, the philosopher, the intellectual discoverer and explorer and originator. To this order of genius belong such men as Plato and Aristotle and Bacon and Kant and all those who are recognized as being among the leaders of mankind in the realm of pure intelligence. The type has nowhere been better seized in words than in the familiar lines of Wordsworth's "Prelude" referring to the statue, in the antechapel of Trinity College at Cambridge,

> Of Newton, with his prism and silent face,
> The marble index of a mind forever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.

With this mode of genius may be associated the genius of the acquisitive mind—the genius for knowledge, the genius for learning. It produces the student, the investigator, the scientist, the scholar. To this order of genius belong such men as Erasmus and Galileo and Buffon and Gibbon and Humboldt and Agassiz and all those who

have had eminent gifts for the discovery and recording of knowledge. This genius for learning seldom achieves great results by its own independent action: its powers are largely locked up from use unless they are accompanied by some degree of genius for thought or expression. In the case of Christ, it was distinctly subordinate to his other powers and especially to his thought. There was little occasion for the use of learning as a means of accomplishing his great ends. On the other hand, there was large room for the display of his own original ideas. The mind of Christ was one of the great originative minds of the world. His thought bears the stamp of supreme intellectual genius. It is, therefore, his genius as a thinker and a man of ideas that chiefly claims our present attention.

The scanty records of Christ's boyhood dwell particularly upon his youthful intelligence and indicate that he was endowed with a remarkable mind. The first account that we have of him after his infancy declares that "the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom." There is only one recorded experience of his early life—the meeting with the doctors in the temple, when he was a lad but twelve years of age. His parents found him "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers." To the anxious ex-

Christ's Boyish Wisdom

postulation of his mother, he made the singular reply, "Wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?" Some consciousness of his great mission was already dawning upon his youthful mind. "They understood not the saying which he spake unto them." Perhaps he did not fully understand himself; but he evidently had a premonition of some great destiny in store for him and a sense of great powers awaiting their time of ripeness. He returned with his parents to Nazareth, "and was subject unto them." He "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." Then the curtain falls for eighteen years, and the details of his life are left to our imagination. The few words vouchsafed to us suggest a life of patient waiting and preparation, of daily toil with his hands, of silent study and meditation. In view of the fact that the record of thirty years is so scanty, it is certainly not a little remarkable that the one outstanding impression should be that of intellectual power in the ungrown boy and of a mind ever expanding toward the great tasks of his manhood.

The Ripened Mind

Finally the great call comes, and there is an immediate and unhesitating response. The mind which has been slowly maturing its powers in solitude and obscurity feels itself ready for its appointed task and steps forth to begin its work. Christ was thirty years of age when he began his ministry, and that ministry was to last but three years. It is

not too much to say that within that brief period of time he set at work influences which have changed the world's intellectual horizon. He did not begin by setting forth a system of ideas. He did not, properly speaking, begin as a thinker at all. His intellectual influence was purely incidental to another purpose, but it was none the less powerful and clear. The record of his life, so to say, is saturated with his thought. His great ideas appear here and there, scattered throughout his preaching and teaching, in casual sayings, in familiar conversation, in more formal discourses, in his parables, in connection with his miracles. Everywhere it appears that this great and influential man is also a great thinker.

The general character and quality of this thought is especially noteworthy. It is not abstract metaphysics or philosophical speculation or theological doctrine. Christ as a thinker was primarily a teacher of religious truth, but he was also a profound psychologist, a large-minded sociologist, a practical philosopher. His thinking may perhaps best be characterized as life wisdom. "He knew what was in man." He understood man's need as an individual. He understood the need of human society. He understood especially the spiritual need of man; and out of the large store of his worldly and divine wisdom, he taught men, as no other teacher has ever taught them, the principles of righteous conduct and the laws of the

Life Wisdom

human spirit. His ideas are revelations of truth concerning human and divine things.

The convincing demonstration of Christ's greatness as a thinker is to be found in examining the actual array of his recorded utterances and considering their depth and significance. As we ponder them one after another, they must impress us by their own weight and by their value as guides to human living. When we consider the vast influence which they have had in the world, we shall have still another measure of their importance. They do not grow into a formal system, but taken all together, they do constitute a vast body of practical philosophy. Christ gave them utterance in a manner seemingly casual but probably in some sense following a law of development which corresponded with the growth of his own mind or which seemed to him best adapted for the impression which he desired to make. Possibly there would be no better method of studying them than to take them as they come in the course of his teaching, dwelling upon the significance of each in its own proper setting and in its relation to the others. This, however, would involve much of detail and repetition, and would make difficult any unity of impression. On the other hand, an affectation of elaborate system in arranging the ideas would be inconsistent with their character and would hardly serve any useful purpose. The simplest way will be to follow a middle course and consider the various thoughts

with reference to a few broad human relations. We do not need to consider all the thoughts in detail, but merely to dwell upon certain great ideas as typical of the whole body of thought. These representative ideas must inevitably remind us of many others and thus bring practically all into the field of mental vision.

Christ was most of all concerned with teaching men their relation to God and spiritual things —with instructing them in religion. All this, however, lies for the most part in a region above ordinary human thinking and involves powers other than those of pure intelligence. It has to do with Christ's character as a prophet and revealer rather than with his genius as a thinker. We are not here concerned with his spiritual revelation, but simply with so much of his thought as is fairly comparable with the ideas of other human minds which we think of as uninspired.

Man's Relation to God

Without encroaching here upon this higher field of religious inspiration, we may venture to note one of the sayings of Christ which lays down a great principle whereby men may test his claim and all claims to supernatural revelation. It is one of his profoundest and wisest utterances, and it involves a great psychological law as well as a statement of religious truth. Here as elsewhere, we shall gain by noting the circumstances under which the idea was presented. The people sought Christ at the

Man's Relation to Faith

Feast of Tabernacles, saying, "Where is He?" He had become a marked man, and they expected to see him on such a public occasion. "Some said, He is a good man; other said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray." "When it was now the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" It was a tribute to his knowledge and power of thought; but Jesus put the personal tribute aside with the words, "My teaching is not mine but his that sent me." What concerned him was their acceptance of his teaching, and he offered them a test by which they might know for themselves whether it was true or false. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." Conviction of the truth depends upon the effort to live the truth. The will set toward righteousness and toward doing all that is known of the will of God gives the best promise of finding out more of truth. Does not all human experience in matters of faith bear witness to the validity of the law which Christ here lays down? He applies the principle fearlessly to the case before him. "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" It was because they had not really willed to do the law which they already knew and professed to accept that they were now blind to the light of new truth. No wonder that the officers who were

sent to arrest him returned with the declaration, "Never man spake like this man." It was true beyond anything that they knew or could realize.

Christ aimed to show men their relation, not only to God and to religious faith, but also to the whole range of truth. The fact is illustrated in the case just cited and even more fully by numerous other cases. When Christ began his teaching in Jerusalem, one of those especially interested was "a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." This leader in Israel came to him secretly by night to inquire about the man and his doctrine. The main subject of the conversation is the mystery of the new birth through the Spirit. This aptly illustrates the distinction already made as to an order of truth which is purely spiritual and which appeals to man's faith rather than to his understanding. The same point is illustrated by Christ's claim to be a divine messenger. Aside from both of these subjects, which belong to another field, there is an idea which comes within the range of our present purpose. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest." Such a thought as that may be judged by the human reason alone, apart from any claim of religious authority. It shows profound insight into human nature and large understanding of human motives. We recognize it

Man's Relation to Truth

at once as a revealing and conclusive statement as to the close relation that exists between man's conduct and his attitude toward the truth.

Christ "spake to them many things in parables." He showed his wisdom and his knowledge of men in the method as well as in the thought. One group of parables was uttered by the sea, Christ being seated in a boat, while the multitude stood upon the shore. The several parables are connected with each other, somewhat like the parts of a single discourse; and they have to do with this matter of man's relation to truth. In the parable of the sower, he illustrates the fact that the value of truth to man depends upon the natures of those who receive it. Some hear but do not understand; some welcome it with joy but cannot hold it fast in sorrow and persecution; some allow it to be choked by the cares and pleasures of life; some hear and understand and cherish and actually live the truth. He follows this up with the thought that truth by its very nature tends to manifest itself and to increase by use and genuine possession. "He that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath." This same lesson is illustrated and enforced in the later parable of the talents. In the parable of the tares, he illustrates the fact that the good and the bad, the true and the false, are inextricably mingled in the world, and that it is often impossible to root out the one without injuring the other. In the

parable of the grain of mustard seed, he illustrates how spiritual truth may grow from humble beginnings to mighty proportions. In the parable of the leaven, he illustrates the power of spiritual truth to act as a moving force in life. In the parables of the treasure hidden in the field and of the pearl of great price, he illustrates the supreme preciousness of spiritual truth. The parable of the net cast into the sea has substantially the same significance as the parable of the tares—that good and evil, true and false, exist together until the time comes for their final separation. The whole group of parables covers a wide range of suggestion as to the nature of truth and man's attitude toward it.

One of the noblest and most fruitful thoughts of Christ is contained in the saying, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It is a principle hard for the human mind to accept and apply. Truth is too often a bondage or a fear. Old truth forms a barrier which we dare not overpass. New truth seems a foe to be resisted and repelled. Men even shut their eyes wilfully against the light of truth that is evident and clear. There is seeming inability or unwillingness to understand that truths of different orders are not necessarily antagonistic but may be held by a mind which is not yet able fully to reconcile them with each other. In view of all this human narrowness, how great and wise seems the utterance of Christ. It implies that all truth

is to be sought freely and fearlessly, that the proving false of what we have held to be true can never be an evil, that the proving true of what we have hitherto rejected can never be anything but gain. Truth is truth, and whatever is true we must wish to know. With free minds, we are to advance from knowledge to knowledge, seeing truth only in fragments, but also seeing the fragments unite here and there, becoming aware of hidden relations where before had been only seeming antagonism, guessing at the large curve which indicates that somewhere out of sight truth is a single and perfect and infinite circle, not daring to miss a single fragment of truth lest we miss a necessary part of the perfect whole. This and infinitely more than this is suggested by Christ's great teaching that the truth shall make men free.

During the last week of his earthly life, feeling that it was only a little while that his light should yet shine among men, Christ uttered a discourse which he concluded with these pleading words: "While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light." He wished to leave behind him in the world men who like him should be living centres of radiance. "Sons of light"—what a profound and lofty and noble conception; what a revealing and heart-stirring phrase! It goes to the very centre of man's relation to truth, with the thought that truth should be embodied in his nature as an illuminating presence. To be children of truth, lovers of truth,

men who welcome all truth and strive to propagate it, men who carry truth ever within them as a shining light—there could be no loftier intellectual ideal for mankind. Carlyle said of John Sterling: "A son of light, if I have ever seen one." It is praise which all men might well covet. It is the ideal which Christ has revealed to men.

The question of truth passes into a question of personality, and it is in this field that the thought of Christ is especially rich and full. He interprets man's relation to himself, unfolding the laws of character, of life, of conduct. This is in effect the large theme of the fullest and most comprehensive single statement of his ideas—the Sermon on the Mount. This alone, by its depth and originality, would serve to impress us with the greatness of his powers of thought. It is the unfolding of a new conception of religion, but it is also rich with great ideas which may fairly be compared with the ideas of other great thinkers. It is with the latter—and especially with those which bear upon individual personality—that we are now concerned.

Man's Relation to Himself

Consider the Beatitudes, with which the great discourse begins. They set forth Christ's conception of the ideal character. They are noteworthy for the nobility of that ideal and for insight into human character and the laws of life. Each of them involves a great life principle. They are not mere arbitrary promises of favor. Each virtue

Ideal Character

bears to its corresponding blessing the relation of cause to effect. Those who realize that they are "poor in spirit" are indeed the ones in whom spiritual richness has already begun and who have the kingdom of heaven already within them. Those who mourn taste a deep joy in comfort unknown to the light of heart; if it is for their sin that they mourn, theirs is "the oil of joy for mourning," "the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." That the meek shall inherit the earth seems a hard saying; but history has much to justify the view that it is the quiet and the humble who continue to possess the earth after the proud and the conquerors have perished in their own striving. Surely those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" shall be filled with their desire. Those that are merciful are most likely to obtain mercy from God and man, while those that take the sword are likely to perish by the sword. "The pure in heart" "shall see God," because inward purity is a condition of spiritual vision; it is the light of the spiritual eye. Who shall so truly be called the sons of God as those who make peace among men? The eighth blessing is a sort of summary, declaring that those who are persecuted for the sake of this sevenfold righteousness shall have the best claim to enter into the eternal reward of God's future kingdom. Surely! Who else?

Having set forth in the Beatitudes the spiritual laws of character, Christ goes on to declare that

it is only this inward righteousness that can make men fit for the kingdom of God, and that they can in no wise enter into it unless their righteousness shall exceed the purely external righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. They have heard condemnation of murder; he condemns anger. They have heard condemnation of adultery; he condemns the evil desire. They have heard condemnation of the breaking of an oath; he says, "Swear not at all." They have heard said, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"; he says, "Resist not him that is evil." They have heard said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy;" he says, "Love your enemies." It is insistence on the spirit of righteousness rather than the letter. It shows that true righteousness goes deeper than men had thought.

Inner and Outer Life

Still with the same underlying idea, he warns them that their righteousness must not be done in order to be seen of men. If they give alms, let it be in secret. When they pray, let it also be in secret and without vain repetition. How brief is the prayer which he teaches them, how simple, how direct, how sincere, how comprehensive. How heart-searching is the petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." It underlies the whole philosophy of prayer, because it involves a profound sincerity in the attitude of the soul toward God. They are to fast with a cheerful countenance. "Ye cannot serve God and

Mammon." That also goes to the depths of the matter. It is a law of universal application in human life.

If righteousness is a matter of inward life, then each man's concern is with his own conduct, and not with that of others. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Yet righteous character will issue in righteous conduct. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit." Not every one who cries, "Lord, Lord," will be recognized of him, but only he who actually does his will. He who hears and does "shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock." He who hears and does not "shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand." The only sure foundation of life is righteous character manifesting itself in righteous deeds.

"The multitudes were astonished at his teaching; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Is it any wonder that they were astonished? This was not the traditional religious instruction to which they were accustomed. It was truth at first hand, fresh, original, startling. It searched the depths of the human heart and of religious thought. It was a new spiritual philosophy. The idea which it especially emphasized was the contrast between spirit and letter in religion. Was there ever any utterance more profound in its principles or farther-reaching in its practical applications? The world has not yet

Spirit and Letter

got over being astonished at it, and has not yet begun to live it with full faith and courage. What the world would really be on these principles of Christ, we can as yet but faintly surmise.

This same insistence on spirit rather than letter is the informing principle of substantially all Christ's teaching concerning the individual life. In his discouse on eating with unwashen hands, for instance, he compares the inner life with the outer. "Hear me all of you, and understand: There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man." The principle seems a perfectly obvious one; but it was strange to those who heard it. Even the disciples could not understand and asked him to explain his parable. "Are ye so without understanding also?" he said to them with a note of natural astonishment. We shall not appreciate the depth and originality of Christ's teachings unless we make allowance for the fact that the world has been living for many centuries in the light of his truth. Let us conceive ourselves as hearing such truth for the first time. The man who first uttered such words in the world was one of the greatest and most original of thinkers.

In connection with the healing of the man born blind, the disciples asked: "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" They voiced the common opinion that bodily affliction must imply the divine displeasure. It is

a misconception as old as Job and doubtless older. Jesus quietly sets it aside. He thinks boldly and justly and independently, because his thought penetrates through the external fact to the real spirit. On the same principle, he justified himself for healing this man on the Sabbath. He reaffirmed by his act the great thought that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and that there was no time too sacred for doing good. He enforced this particular lesson many times. It was a sore point with the Pharisees that he should heal on the Sabbath, and Christ lost no opportunity to reveal to them the spirit behind the form. On this same occasion, he rebuked the Pharisees with the pungent words: "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth." There are none so blind as those who will not see, except those who think they see and do not.

Higher and Lower Life

Christ not only contrasts the inner and the outer life of the individual; he has also something to say concerning the relation between the higher life of the spirit and the practical life of the every-day world. Is there not deep wisdom and insight underlying his words to Martha when she was "cumbered about much serving" and complained that Mary "sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word"? "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which

shall not be taken away from her." Christ does not cast contempt upon the active and practical life; but it is well for the soul to turn away from worldly cares to seize upon the rare opportunity for spiritual communion, and well also for it to recognize the privileged moment when it comes. When the Great Teacher was a guest in the house, it was a time for simple fare and spiritual fellowship. This recognition of the true character of her guest was the one thing which Martha needed to add to her careful and hospitable zeal. This one thing Mary had felt instinctively, knowing well that there would be a time and place for common household cares.

In very different fashion, the same principle was enforced on another occasion. Those who wished to embarrass him asked: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" The question was full of pitfalls, for it involved the whole matter of the relation of the Jews to the Roman Empire. Christ answered, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." It successfully evaded the trap that was set for him. It suggested the only practical course of action in the existing political conditions. It laid down a broad principle of human conduct as between claims political and spiritual. As usual, the principle goes to the root of the matter, is impartial in its recognition of both sides, and is far-reaching in its application.

Nowhere is the thought of Christ bolder and

more severe and more incisive than in his denunciation of the Pharisees. The prevailing note is a rebuke of hypocrisy and formalism and loud profession. He does not undervalue the outward forms in their proper place. "These ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone." Even in his most vehement utterance, his thought is always just and balanced and comprehensive. He bade the people "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." He saw clearly that Pharisaism was the deadliest of evils, the destruction of all true character. The same vehement note recurs again and again throughout his ministry, and it was uttered for the last time and with the greatest force and fulness during the closing week of his life. He and the Pharisees are the living symbols of the two extremes of religious thought and action.

During the same last week, Christ sat down one day "over against the treasury," and watched the multitude casting in their gifts. In the shadow of approaching death, he could stoop from the terrible height of his world destiny to notice a certain poor widow casting in her two mites and to draw from that humble incident another of his great lessons. "Many that were rich cast in much." "This poor widow cast in more than they all." Every gift is to be valued according to the spirit of it and according to the sacrifice involved.

It seems as though in this last week Christ sought to repeat and reaffirm many of his most

important teachings. Among other things, he emphasized one of the great cardinal traits of Christian character, the virtue of humility. He had set it forth early and with prominence in the Beatitudes. Just before his final departure from Galilee, the disciples asked him: "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They were thinking of rank in a temporal kingdom; but Christ showed them the law of spiritual greatness. He set a little child in the midst and said: "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." To the worldly mind, it is an absurd paradox: the small shall be great. To the mind which looks deep into life and the human soul, it is a great psychological truth. Humility is the beginning of any true spiritual life. On his last journey to Jerusalem, the mother of James and John asked that her sons might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom. Jesus answered her: "Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." On the very day before his crucifixion, the disciples were contending as to which of them should be accounted greatest. He said to them once more: "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." At the close of their Last Supper, he washed his disciples' feet, that he might leave them an example of the first of Christian

virtues. Then for the last time, he admonished them: "A servant is not greater than his Lord." Perhaps his most comprehensive statement of the law is this: "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." There is a whole philosophy of human ideals in such a saying, and he was a bold and original teacher who could lay down such a law for the first time. How startling is the contrast with ordinary human thinking and action. The words were spoken in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees when the guests chose the chief seats at the table. They occur again at the close of his parable contrasting the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican. They are repeated in connection with the denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees only three days before his death. Surely Christ meant to teach men that humility is the fundamental Christian virtue.

It is character that looms largest in Christ's thought—character based on right relations to God and to all truth. Character, however, has also its external relations whereby it manifests the power which it has drawn from its deep spiritual sources. One of the most obvious of these relations is the relation to worldly things. In setting forth his thought concerning it, Christ's emphasis is still upon the contrast between spiritual and material. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Be-

Man's Relation to Worldly Things

tween the lines, we may read that the true riches is the riches of character. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Those who make life consist in the abundance of possessions will come to make these the object of their affections, while those who seek to amass wealth of a spiritual nature will come to "set their affections on the things which are above." Therefore, says Christ, "It is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." It is no arbitrary declaration, but one which finds its basis in the facts of human nature. In the light of it, how deep and solemn is Christ's oft-repeated warning: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

So wise and broad a thinker could not leave out of account the fact that man also has relations to his fellow man. One of the great human duties is the duty of self-sacrifice—for other men, for the truth, and for the divine allegiance. What a startling paradox it must have seemed when Christ said: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Yet it unfolds a great truth concerning the necessity of sacrificing the lower good in pursuit of the higher. It is indeed the men who will not spare even their own lives who accomplish the world's great spiritual victories and advance the cause of humanity. The lesson gains immeasurably in force when we remember two of the

Man's Relation to Man

occasions on which it was spoken. On the first, he had just been declaring that "he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." When Peter expostulated, Christ rebuked him: "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." Then he made clear that the law of sacrifice applied to them as well as to him. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." On the other occasion, he was speaking almost in the shadow of the cross and when his soul was troubled by the dark hour coming on. It was a lesson whose truth was to be illustrated in his life, in the lives of his disciples, and in the lives of countless thousands of good men and women in every generation. Christ makes clear something of his larger meaning when he adds, "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The underlying thought finds an echo in the noble lines of Emerson:

> 'Tis man's perdition to be safe,
> When for the truth he ought to die.

It has found many another echo in the course of the centuries, both in life and in literature. All noble souls have felt it to be profoundly true. Their highest conceptions have been but a thinking over again of the thought of Christ. In each

new restatement, it seems like a revelation born of great genius and character.

Another great duty toward our fellows is the duty of forgiveness. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ had taught men to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In the last week of his life, he said: "Whensoever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." We may learn from Christ that the largest spiritual natures are severe with themselves and tender toward others. The disciples, however, evidently felt that there should be limits to forbearance. Peter said: "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto them Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven." In a word, there is practically no limit. It is the utterance of a large mind and of a large heart.

The duty of forgiveness broadens out into the duty of a large human charity. This finds impressive illustration in the account of the woman taken in adultery. The scribes and Pharisees brought her to Christ, reminded him of the law of Moses which bade to stone such, and asked, "What then sayest thou of her?" They were hoping to entrap him into some show of disrespect for the traditional law. How easily and skilfully he evaded them. We can fancy a faint smile of irony curling his lips as he stoops to write with his

finger on the ground and answers their insistence with the words, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The veiled shaft went straight to its mark. Without a word, they slunk softly out one by one—"beginning from the eldest, even unto the last." They had received a personal rebuke; but they had also heard the implied annunciation of a great law. He who would condemn another should have pure hands himself. Judgment should be tempered with mercy. The most righteous spirit is the readiest to pardon. The incident illustrates Christ's ability and inclination to go beneath the surface facts to the essential principle. It also illustrates—what is shown by many other instances—the readiness and resourcefulness of his mind. He was always sure of himself, always victorious.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged," had been the command of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. It is human charity on the negative side; and it bids men to measure their relation to their fellows by the consideration of their own relation to God. Christ has a still greater law, a law not negative but positive, a law which also finds its standard in the relation between God and Man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Truly, "There is none other commandment greater than these." Love for man finds its basis in love for God. Love for

one's neighbour is in equal balance with love for oneself. It is a law of perfect equilibrium, delivering man from selfishness on the one side and from self-annihilation on the other. Nowhere is there finer illustration of the exquisite justness and wisdom of Christ's thinking.

Thus far, we have examined Christ's thought as it concerns the individual, in his personal relations to God, to religious faith, to truth, to himself, to worldly possessions, to his neighbour. These are the fundamental elements of the human problem; but they have more than an individual application. They must be applied to human society at large—to man in his general relations; and in harmony with this fact, the thought of Christ is not merely individualistic but also social. He begins with the individual, because individuals are the enduring factors of which society is composed. From this centre, human organization has moved out in ever widening circles—individual, family, tribe, city, nation, toward the federation of the world. Yet in all this expansion, the individual and the family are permanent; and the more the unit of social organization is enlarged, the more these must gain in importance unless men are to be swallowed up in the mass. It seems as though humanity were tracing a circle from the individual and the family, out through the ever enlarging social units, back to a new emphasis upon family and individual. If this be true, Christ has laid

Social Relations of Man

the only sure foundation. Yet he has recognized that, if our attention is exclusively fixed upon the individual, we shall lose sight of some indispensable truths; and he has therefore brought man's social interests within the range of his thinking.

When Christ began his ministry in Nazareth, he went "into the synagogue on the sabbath day," and read these words from "the book of the prophet Isaiah": "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Then he added: "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." It is difficult to understand all this in a purely figurative and spiritual sense. "The acceptable year of the Lord" is an allusion to the Jewish Year of Jubilee, and seems to suggest that Christ was aiming to inaugurate a similar but world-wide readjustment of social relations—that he was proclaiming a social as well as an individual gospel.

Christ's broad conception of human brotherhood is set forth in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer who came to tempt him was able to quote the law of love to God and love to man; but he had no proper understanding of what he had read, and his attorney logic was only capable of the quibbling question, "And who is my neighbour?" Then Christ told him the story of

the Good Samaritan, and asked: "Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers?" There was only one answer: "He that shewed mercy on him." Out of the hostile mouth itself, he had drawn the great truth by the plain lesson of his parable. Human brotherhood transcends the bounds of individual association or country or race or creed. It is at bottom a spiritual and not a material relation; but it recognizes the obligation of service to all mankind. Wherever there is human need, there is our neighbour. Wherever there is kindly human helpfulness and love, there is the neighbourly spirit.

As Christ sat at meat in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, he bade his host not to invite his friends or brethren or kinsmen or rich neighbours, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. There is a gospel of social relations which is revolutionary in its final tendencies. Still more radical is the teaching which immediately follows. It is the parable of the invited guests who "all with one consent began to make excuse." Then the master of the house bids his servants go out into the highways and hedges and gather in the outcasts of society. The suggestion of this and of other similar parables is that the comfortable and smug and busy and self-satisfied citizens whose minds are set on worldly things have no time or inclination for spiritual entertainment, but that the

kingdom of God must appeal to those who are poor in spirit.

When men heard Christ and saw him, they said: "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?" They were amazed at his achievements as a healer, but his thought was no less impressive than his miracles. They felt that behind the mighty works there was a mightier mind—a mind which overawed and astonished them. They knew him as the son of the carpenter. They knew his family and all his human circumstances. None of these accounted for him. Their wonder is the wonder which men continually feel about the unaccountable manifestations of genius, but nowhere more deeply than in the case of Christ. However he may have differed from other men of genius, he had at least those inborn gifts of intellectual power which seem to be independent of heredity and surroundings and education, and which strike the minds of men with amazement at the disproportion between the manifest results and the conditions out of which they seem to have grown.

Wisdom of Christ

The sayings of Christ are an exposition of the laws of life. They are simple in statement and they have become very familiar as the common and accepted wisdom of the world; but they are none the less great and profound. Each of them has an inexhaustible store of suggestion, and all of them together are the outcome of a deep and

underlying mystery of wisdom which the mind of man has not yet fathomed. The thought of Christ is everywhere lofty, noble, profound, original; but it conveys always a sense of something yet mightier which is still unexpressed. It is as though he gave to mankind all of his thought that they could understand or that human language could convey, and then enfolded within his utterance hidden meanings for other and wiser generations to interpret, and beyond this hinted at still profounder depths of meaning which might be explored forever. Something like this is felt in the works of the supreme geniuses of the world; but no utterances have equalled those of Christ in their suggestion of the unfathomable mystery.

Dominant Mind of Scripture

The Scriptures bear the impress of many mighty minds; but dominating them all is the mind of Jesus of Nazareth. Moses and Isaiah and David and Solomon and many other great thinkers fill the Old Testament with the riches of their wisdom; but it is Christ who confirms or overrules what they have said and who assigns them their final place in the intellectual history of the race. He assumes as of right the lordship and the primacy. "Behold, a greater than Jonas is here." "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The Jews were dumbfounded at what seemed to them his arrogance. "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" Yes, assuredly he

was greater than Abraham and all the prophets, not merely as the Messiah, but by the testimony of the written record of his thoughts and words. Greater he was as a thinker, judged by the ordinary standards of human comparison. Among the wisest of his own day, too—from the time when as a boy of twelve years old he conversed with the doctors in the temple to the time when he stood for judgment before Annas and Caiaphas—he displayed a serene consciousness of intellectual mastery. If we turn to the New Testament, we shall find there also the evidence of the thinking of great minds. Paul, James, Peter, John, and others, have written what the world has never ceased to read and ponder. Yet these men, too, thought and wrote under the conscious influence and inspiration of Christ's thinking. They asked for nothing better than to expound what he had taught and lived. The very echo of his voice is heard in theirs.

The wisdom of Christ is diffused throughout the New Testament. It is not too much to say that it is diffused throughout the thought of the modern world. How many of the wisest in every generation since have felt and acknowledged that same intellectual mastery. Not only in matters of religious faith, but also in the realm of great ideas, they have been glad to sit at the feet of Christ and to learn of him. His thought has literally dominated the thought of the world, even as it domi-

Dominant Mind of the World

nates the thought of the Bible. In the broad field of the world's thinking from his day to ours, he has overruled and confirmed and inspired. Wherever philosophy has been most profound and comprehensive, wherever literature has been most lofty and impressive, wherever the practical wisdom which guides human affairs has been most just and righteous and beneficent, there the thought of Christ has exerted a powerful influence. Even those who were hostile to his religious teaching have not been able to escape the impress of his ideas.

The thoughts of Christ have been the seed thoughts of Christian civilization. Not the church alone, with all its wonderful flower and fruitage, has sprung from that sowing. The civilization of modern Europe and America has been in large part its harvest. If we could take the thought of Christ out of the modern world, we should take away most of what is grandest and best in its history. Wherever the religion of Christ has gone, the seeds have been sown and have sprung up to bear great intellectual harvests. Nations have been regenerated intellectually as well as morally, and have taken their true place of influence in the world. These ideas have created institutions, have shaped nations, have elevated races. These principles underlie the very fabric of civilized society and have determined the character of the superstructure. They permeate society everywhere and leaven the whole mass.

They are, consciously or unconsciously, the standard by which we test a large part of our thought and action. They are appealed to in senate and court and public assembly. They are regarded in international negotiations, in peace congresses, even on the field of battle. They influence the life of the family. They affect the life and character of the individual. No part of our life is too great and none is too small to be without the range of their possible influence. Even where men disregard them in practical action, they pay them the homage of a lip service which is itself a testimony to their recognized right of sway. Much of this is of course due to their religious sanction; but even where the religious sanction is lacking, the very weight of the ideas themselves has forced men to recognize their lofty and profound wisdom as moral principles.

The ideas of Christ have been revolutionary. They have changed the face of the world. To the men of his own day, they came with a startling newness, because they were so far in advance of the age. If his hearers were afraid of them, it was largely because they were felt to be out of harmony with their traditional convictions and calculated to turn and overturn until they had made all things new. Men of any age shrink instinctively from ideas which seem charged with such potency of change. To the men of our own day, these ideas seem almost commonplace, because they have been so long familiar to our

thought and because they have altered the world to conform to the ideas. This complacent sense of familiarity is in part due to the fact that we have not yet looked deep enough into these ideas. We have grasped their superficial meaning, and flatter ourselves that we have conformed our lives to them. If we would look deeper, they might still startle us with the foreboding of revolutions yet to come. They have not yet exhausted their power to change the world.

The greatness of Christ's thought is to be measured by the impression which that thought makes upon our minds as compared with the thought of other men, and also by the evident effect which it has had upon the thoughts and actions and lives of others. Judged by either of these standards, it justifies our conception of Christ as the wisest of men. To any fair and capable judgment, his ideas must seem among the weightiest and profoundest and most subtle and most original that have ever been recorded. Likewise their influence must appear great beyond any reasonable comparison. Whatever allowance may be made for other factors in the shaping of modern life and thought, whatever may be said toward minimizing the effect of his ideas upon mankind, it can hardly be questioned that the most important single influence over the modern mind has been the thought of Christ.

If there be any substance at all to such claims, then Christ is the intellectual master of the world.

Within the narrow circle of the world's great thinkers, he displays a power which makes their minds bow to his. He has thought deeper and farther and more truly than they. His thought has also incomparably more of solidity. Their best ideas seem like airy speculations, mere cloud-castles of the mind. His are as substantial as the facts of life; they endure from age to age and are wrought into the ever-growing fabric of history and society. They reach beyond the circle of purely intellectual interest and appeal to the common man as well as to the philosopher. They are not merely for the lecture-room, but for the home and the market-place. Through the whole range of human thought and activity, they make good the intellectual supremacy of Christ.

Christ is "the first of them that know." He is the first of them that think. He is the first of them that by their thinking have influenced mankind. He said, "I am the light of the world." It is a stupendous claim. It is a claim, not of spiritual and supernatural power alone, but of enlightenment to man's mind and soul. It is, of course, a claim that goes beyond the intellectual, but it includes the intellectual. So far as it is a claim to be the light of the human mind, it must be justified, if at all, by the actual consideration of his thought as it is recorded for us in the Scriptures and as it has manifested its influence upon humanity. There it stands—the thought of Christ—legibly recorded in the written

Gospels, indelibly stamped upon the history of the race, ineffaceably impressed upon the human mind. Does it or does it not justify his claim to be, in the intellectual sense, "the light of the world"?

There is another question that almost inevitably forces itself upon us. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" He had taught and worked and lived among them. What impression had he made as to his character and personality? The answer was, "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." That was their estimate. He was a mighty man risen from the dead, John or one of the old prophets. Then he turned to his disciples themselves, and asked, "But who say ye that I am?" They had known him most intimately and with the fullest opportunity for understanding. What would be their verdict? We all know the impassioned answer of Peter, upon which Christ gave his blessing. The record is still open. Nineteen centuries have added their testimony to the greatness and influence of that mighty mind. In the light of it all, the question is no longer to the dead, but to the living, "Who say ye that I am?"

The Divine Thinker

II

THE GENIUS FOR EXPRESSION

THERE is a mode of genius which may be called the genius of the creative mind. It is the genius for the embodiment of ideas in form, the genius for expression. It produces the artist, in his many varieties—orator, poet, painter, sculptor, musician. To this order of genius belong such men as Demosthenes and Cicero, Homer and Shakespeare, Raphael and Angelo, Bach and Beethoven, and all those whose gift is to make ideas impressive and immortal by the effectiveness of their utterance. It is to such men as these that the word genius is most often applied, because it is these who seem to possess the most of originality and inspiration and creative power. It need hardly be pointed out how wide is the range of genius here represented and how great is the variety of artistic productions. They belong to the same order because they have the same underlying instinct and purpose—to create imaginative symbols through which to express thought and feeling. This expression is superior to ordinary literal and unartistic utterance, not by virtue of greater clearness, but by virtue of greater vividness and force and permanence.

In men of a comparatively low order of artistic ability, there is a tendency to make art the mere servant of some didactic intention. They produce art with a purpose, and the common result is to spoil or mar the artistic work by making it the vehicle of the moral lesson. In a higher realm of genius reigns the instinct and the doctrine of "art for art's sake." The impulses of genius are too strong and too exclusive to be turned toward any ends but their own. The consciousness of power is a sufficient excuse for the exercise of power, and the artistic result is entirely satisfying as an ultimate aim. On the highest level of all, the great artist is also a great man. He dominates his art instead of allowing his art to dominate him. His aims are the large aims of human personality, and he cannot be content with the immediate ends of a single form of art. Here again art is united with purpose; but it is no longer the narrow and limited purpose of the didactic artist. Art is not here the mere servant and instrument of an idea. It is a lord in the field of ideas as well as in the field of expression. It is thrilled and inspired by ideas which almost seem to create their own symbols and find their own modes of utterance. Thought and expression become like soul and body, and the artistic result seems to have sprung up by a sort of natural growth. Art no longer exists for its own sake, but for the sake of man and for the sake of the great ideas and emotions

Purpose in Art

and experiences which make the life of the human soul. It is to this highest order of creative spirits that Christ belongs.

The man who possesses the fundamental instinct of the artist must select for his purpose one or more of the great forms of expression. Sometimes this is determined by the necessary limitations of the genius itself. Where the range of genius is broader, the particular form of art to be chosen may be determined by the conditions of time or place or by the larger purpose which the artist has in view. The impulses to expression and the instinct for expression were so strong in Christ that it is easily conceivable that he might have had open to his choice many of the great forms of art, and that his actual choice might have been different under other conditions. This, however, is mere speculation, and what concerns us is to note the form which he did actually choose. So far as the genius for expression manifests itself in Christ, it is primarily a genius for inspired utterance through language. His art, in a word, is the art of literature rather than the art of painting or of sculpture or of music. The genius which he displayed is akin to that of the orator, the poet, the dramatist, the story-teller, rather than to that of the painter or sculptor or musician. His artistic utterance was not an end in itself; it was incidental to a vastly larger purpose; but it was in exquisite

Christ a Literary Genius

harmony with that purpose, and its results are among the great literary creations of the world.

The true artist has a fine sense of the innate excellences and capabilities of his material—of the delicacy and strength and suggestiveness that lurk in line and color and light and shade and texture and mass and proportion and symmetry and tone quality and harmony. In the literary artist, this takes the form of a fine appreciation of the powers and possibilities of human language —of words, in themselves, in their relation to each other, in relation to the ideas which they represent. The most obvious literary gift is the gift of utilizing this fine appreciation to the framing of exquisite and impressive speech in original forms, to the embodying of great ideas in perfect language. Along with this feeling for beauty and fitness in expression, goes a power of organizing these effects into something of unity, even if it be only the logical unity of the clear thinker. By this means, each utterance, however brief, gains a perfect wholeness which makes it seem like an organic thing, capable of containing the breath of life which genius imparts to it. The single phrase or sentence becomes memorable as the perfect and permanent symbol of its idea. The brief statement or exhortation rounds out its thought with symmetry and completeness. The longer discourse has a coherence and balance of parts and a unity of total impression which distinguish the

Mastery over Language

work of art from the formless and futile utterance. This power over speech, Christ possessed in a preeminent degree. It is discoverable and appreciable even through the medium of a foreign language. Joined with the force and beauty of the ideas themselves, it helps to place his sayings among the great rememberable utterances of the world. In illustrating this phase of Christ's genius for expression, we must content ourselves with a few examples of his most striking sayings, allowing these to stand as specimens of the rest. We may note the beauty and fitness of individual sayings, and where these form parts of a larger whole, may observe the larger unity.

Sermon on the Mount

Perhaps no utterance of Christ could furnish a better point of departure than the Sermon on the Mount. We have already considered its thought, and are concerned here with its excellence as a complete discourse giving apt and impressive expression to that thought and containing many beautiful and ever-memorable utterances. As a whole, it is a solemn and heart-searching discourse, setting forth in brief compass but with effective phrase and wonderful wealth of illustration the contrast between a genuine spiritual sincerity and a formal observance of the mere letter of moral law. It begins by sketching the outline of the perfect spiritual character. It then branches out in various directions to make application of its great principle to different sides of human life. Then,

gathering up the force of its varied and powerful commands and warnings and exhortations, and of its vivid and apt illustrations, it bears all home upon the hearer in a conclusion of tremendous impressiveness and force. For many-sided presentation and powerful enforcement of a great truth, it would be difficult to find anything to compare with it.

When we come to consider some of the most striking details of the great discourse, we must be even more strongly impressed with its surpassing excellence. It begins with the Beatitudes. Is there anywhere in literature a passage of equal length which is more beautiful or more rich in suggestion? As a whole, it sets forth a graphic conception of the perfections of the ideal character. From this point of view alone, it is an exquisite work of literary art, a masterpiece of expression, a prose poem, finding just and appropriate words and images for the portrayal of a spiritual conception almost impossible to capture in language. Then the several Beatitudes are equally perfect and admirable in themselves. They are verily jewels of speech, "that on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time sparkle forever." Each has a distinct and individual beauty like that of some unique precious stone which contributes its particular color and radiance to the glory of some rich jewel. If this seems to any one exaggerated praise, let him fill his mind with the rarest lines

The Beatitudes

of the world's poetry and with the most beautiful sentences of its prose, and then with quickened mind and sensitive heart read the Beatitudes one by one, and see whether they suffer by the comparison. They are simple and unaffected in phrase and cadence and imagery, but it is the simplicity which is the last word in the perfect art of expression. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Each of them falls upon the soul like a benediction from the lips of some great high priest.

Imagery and Interpretation

Immediately following the Beatitudes, Christ tells his disciples that they—in whom these blessed virtues are to be illustrated—are "the salt of earth," "the light of the world." The first of these phrases is so apt and telling that it has become crystallized in speech as one of the current symbols of thought. The other is more obvious; but it is immediately made the basis of two striking bits of imagery. The one is large and noble in its suggestion: "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." The other is as homely as the salt and as aptly illustrative: "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." The lesson which flows from the imagery is as natural as it is beautifully expressed:

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Then follows a series of spiritual interpretations of various commandments of the old law, each strikingly and effectively expressed and all culminating in the startling injunction: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." How wonderfully the general law is suggested through concrete phrase; how tenderly appealing fall the words, "that ye may be the children of your Father"; how noble in its grandeur is the thought of the sunshine and the rain coming as the gift of God upon the good and the bad alike. Then the whole law of human conduct, with all its divine sanction and authority and example, is gathered up into a single idea and expressed in a single immortal sentence: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The Lord's Prayer

Perhaps nothing spoken by Christ affords a finer example of the combination of simplicity and sublimity than the Lord's Prayer. It is like the voice of a little child uttering the holy aspiration of a saint and the profound wisdom of a seer. Its sevenfold music falls upon the ear like the ca-

dences of a great and solemn poem. Within its brief compass, it enfolds the whole spirit and scope and method of prayer. "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." There we feel the fatherhood of God, the divine exalted majesty of God, the ever-blessed holiness of God, the childlike but reverent attitude of the prayerful human spirit. "Thy kingdom come." Three words express all the yearning of earth and heaven for the triumph of righteousness and the establishment of its eternal dominion. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It is an utterly simple prayer for the supreme spiritual good—that every human will may yield obedience to the will of God, even as "his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word," even as the "ministers of his, that do his pleasure." "Give us this day our daily bread." By a swift and unaffected transition, we pass from the spiritual heights to the plane of our common life, recognizing dependence upon God for all temporal as well as eternal good, and praying with words of simplest meaning for the needs of our daily life. "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." That sums up for us the law that we must do to others as we would have God do to us. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." There is recognition of the terrible fact of sin and of the necessity for divine deliverance. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power,

and the glory, forever." That is the basis of all human hope for deliverance and forgiveness and providence and the accomplishment of the divine will and the coming of the divine kingdom and the hallowing of the divine name. In him is the inspiration and the answer of all prayer. How perfectly the whole is knit together into a unity of conception and expression which recognizes in fitting language the various aspects of man's relation to God and gathers them all up together between the tenderly reverent "Our Father" and the magnificent ascription to him of "the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."

Almost every passage of the Sermon on the Mount would yield example of Christ's wonderful power of expressing great ideas in appropriate form; but we must be content with a few further specimens. Consider, for instance, this single majestic sentence: "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Even apart from its context, such a sentence falls upon the ear with sonorous cadence and impresses the mind with its unique and powerful image. Again, turn to the most exquisitely beautiful of all illustrations: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Whether for music of language, appositeness of illustration, tender appreciation of natural beauty, or the ef-

Various Illustrations

fectiveness of the contrast between the flower of the field and the most magnificent of all kings, it delights and satisfies the mind. One might venture to risk one's claims for Christ as a master of expression upon that one sentence alone. Another illustration in the same sermon, fit to match with this in aptness and suggestiveness, if not in sheer beauty, is this: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

However brief and incomplete our consideration of the Sermon on the Mount, we must at least dwell with appreciation upon its beginning and its conclusion. The Beatitudes are unique and perfect. The concluding simile is well-nigh matchless in its kind and forms a worthy and impressive close to the greatest of all discourses. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." In reading it, one has a sense of phrase echoing to phrase and thought

to thought, with a likeness in difference which builds up the final contrast with tremendous power, leaving upon the mind the impression of rocklike solidity on the one hand and on the other of irretrievable ruin. How like a very landslip of disaster slopes the cadence of the final words—"and great was the fall of it."

In reading the Sermon on the Mount, one is reminded of the words in which Coleridge characterizes Wordsworth's "Prelude"—"high and passionate thoughts to their own music chanted." The parallel is by no means an exact one. This is not an "Orphic song"—it is not poetry, but something quite distinct from it; only there is that haunting sense as though the thought were producing the music to which its measured steps proceed. It is the impression of a great array of ideas, marching with swift or with solemn tread or rising like an angelic company with measured beat of wings, and ever evolving a music which is the sound of their own motion. This is the highest reach of expression in language; and it comes only when the thought is so intense and sincere that it forgets all artifice and obeys only the natural impulse to spontaneous utterance, when feeling is so deep and genuine that it thrills through every added word and makes the whole fabric of speech vibrate with its own rhythmical pulsation.

In all the other utterances of Christ, there is abundant evidence of this same mastery over the

resources of language and over the effects which language can produce. For the sake of giving ourselves some sense of his variety and range, we may here note a few striking examples, leaving others to reveal their qualities of style and their logical unity in an incidental way as we study them for other purposes. One familiar instance will illustrate how a common incident in Christ's life could be made the occasion for a noble utterance and how a casual saying could be as perfect and as beautiful in itself as the most full and elaborate discourse. "They brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them." Jesus "took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Then he poured all the tenderness of his great heart and all the sweet condescension of his lofty mind into the simple but immortal words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." How marvelously the brief saying embodies the whole spirit of the incident and of Christ's attitude toward the weak and the humble. With what perfect beauty it expresses his human tenderness and then leads out the thought to the sublime lesson that the only entrance into the kingdom of God is by the pathway of humility and of simple-hearted sincerity.

Variety and Range of Utterance

Let us remind ourselves also of that wonderful conversation in which Christ comforted his dis-

ciples. The opening words fall like the very balm of consolation upon sorrowful hearts. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you." So perfectly does the whole passage express the spirit and the idea of divine comfort, so tenderly does it touch the heart, and so confidently does it uplift the mind, that it has been for nineteen centuries the chosen symbolic language of consolation, to be spoken in the house of affliction or beside the world's open graves. Like so many of Christ's sayings, it passes from the limits of the immediate occasion to the widest reaches of thought and the loftiest heights of religious conception, from the "upper room" at Jerusalem to the glory of the "many mansions" and the eternal hope of the divine companionship. The whole conversation is full of similar felicities of speech; but we must only catch an echo of them here and there. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Apart from their purely religious association, simply as utterances of thought and feeling in human speech, they verily seem to breathe an air from celestial places and lift up the heart while they expand the mind.

Let us listen now to a different note: "O Jeru-

salem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" How mournful the heart-breaking pathos of such a speech. Christ contemplates the failure of all his earthly hopes for the salvation of his own people, laments the hardness of heart which has led them to reject and kill so many of God's messengers and which is now leading them to reject him and send him to the cross, unrolls before his vision their tragic history in the past and their tragic doom for the future; and all the burden of his heart and mind seems to wail through the words, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," and to break in a sob at the last—"and ye would not." If anything could heighten the pathos of such a lamentation over the fate of an apostate race, it is the homely figure—"even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"—which gives to it the final touch of utter sincerity and simplicity. It is genius, and not artifice, which speaks thus, and even genius does not quite touch it unless informed by the pure mind and the child-like heart.

Does it by possibility seem to any that the utterances of Christ are full of tenderness and beauty —even of sublimity—but that they are lacking in masculine energy and force? We have already seen illustrations to the contrary, and many more might be given; but let us take an extreme case.

Christ's rebukes of the scribes and Pharisees are numerous; but the one uttered in the last week of his life is the fullest and most representative. Certainly there is no lack of force—even of vehemence—in that scathing denunciation. Seven times it smote upon their heads—that fierce lightning of the wrath of God—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"—and each revealing stroke was followed by the reverberating thunders of divine accusation. One imagines a note of regretful pity mingling with this stern severity; but it could only have intensified the tremendous effect. How they must have cringed and trembled before that reiterated woe. How they must have writhed at the epithets—"blind guides," "whited sepulchres," "offspring of vipers." One can imagine them livid with wrath—seeing blood and thinking blood—already in spirit crying, "Crucify him, crucify him." While they are still stunned with his terrible rebuke, Christ overwhelms them with a tremendous prophecy: "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation." What an appalling doom! Then with infinite pity moving his whole nature, Christ bursts into the lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem."

Perhaps we could not better close our illustration of Christ's effective use of language than by a reference to his discourse on the final judgment. He presents first a vivid picture of the Son of man seated on the throne of his glory, with all nations gathered before him, but divided into two companies, "as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." Then come the two remarkable sentences of invitation and of dismissal: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The two series of reasons which follow, as also the expostulations of righteous and wicked, are likewise almost precisely parallel in form; and this very precision in contrast gives added force and effectiveness. The whole passage is constructed with careful art, and yet it is perfectly simple and natural. The whole is closed with the solemn sentence: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Use of Imagination

The fundamental power of the creative mind—the power without which no man is an artist—is imagination. It underlies the literary art as well as every other. It shapes out the forms and symbols in which ideas find vivid and concrete embodiment. It joins together the body and the soul of thought. The literary use of the imagination is largely determined by the particular form. There can be

no doubt that Christ's favorite form of literary art was the parable. It was so, not through mere literary preference or aptitude, but because the parable best suited his purpose of religious instruction. It is a form which reveals deep mysteries of truth, but which can also hide them until it finds ears that can hear, eyes that can see, minds that can understand, and hearts that can enter into vital sympathy. It is a great literary form, in the hands of a master, because it unites the effect of the literary creation with the effect of a great message to the mind and the heart and the life. Surely Christ was the world's great master of parable. As surely as Shakespeare was a great dramatist or Homer a great epic poet, Christ was supreme in his own chosen field. His parables were great in themselves and take their place among the great literary creations of the world, not alone because of his consummate genius as a literary artist, but also because the truths which he had to utter were the greatest ever spoken to man. The parable can never be separated from the truth which it is created to teach. It is in Christ's parables, then, that we shall find the best illustration of his imagination; and a few of these may be chosen to exhibit his use of this originative and vivifying power.

There are certain utterances of Christ which approach the parable form without being in any strict sense parables. "Consider the lilies" is properly an illustration of God's care. Literal

Figurative Speech

statement and picturesque image are placed side by side, the one for clearness and the other for vividness. The description of the house upon the rock and the house upon the sand is an extended simile. Incidentally, it is interesting to observe the difference between such a simile and the famous similes of Homer. The Homeric simile is carefully elaborated for the sake of the poetic picture, far beyond the immediate necessities of illustration. Christ confines himself to such concrete details as will make the simile closely fit the truth. The method is in harmony with his purpose as a teacher. Another famous illustration of Christ is rather an extended metaphor. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." The conception is worked out in much detail. "My Father is the husbandman." "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." This last has something of the character of the simile rather than the metaphor. It also illustrates the curious mingling of figurative and literal which marks the whole passage, as for instance again in the words, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." There is a less perfect fusion of thought and figure than in those cases where the imagination is given full play. It is theoretically less perfect as a piece of literary art; but as the passage is read, one feels no sense of incongruity and receives the impres-

sion of a perfect fitness and completeness. This is probably due to the fact that our minds are borne along by the mind of Christ to lay stress upon the great truth rather than on its figurative expression. We pass backward and forward between literal statement and figure with perfect ease and naturalness and with a feeling that the two are almost identical. All of these cases illustrate the tendency of Christ to imaginative expression, even where he is not fully yielding himself to the creation of a complete work of the imagination.

In the parable of the sower, we have a perfect and complete picture, without any admixture of literal or interpretative elements. It is drawn from one of the most familiar aspects of life. In the centre of the picture is the figure of the sower, scattering his seed with free sweep of the arm. Here is the field, with the highway running beside it, there the protruding patches of rock and the clumps of thorn—details chosen with reference to the illustrative purpose. It is a picture simply composed, but carefully planned for the desired effect and vivid because of its commonplace reality. It is as unaffected as one of Millet's paintings. The varying results of the sowing are touched with a like simplicity and naturalness. There is no explanation of meaning. It is simply a description to be interpreted by any one who has sufficient imagination and spiritual insight. "He that hath ears, let him hear." Later, Christ explained it to his

Various Parables

disciples in literal terms. It is forever the picturesque symbol of that meaning.

The parable of the Good Shepherd is equally simple, and even more beautiful. It is remarkably brief, but every detail is perfect, and the whole picture is satisfying to the imagination. Moreover, there is here and there a note of appealing tenderness which can be felt but not described, and which makes the parable unique. As in the case of the sower, there is a suggestion of meanings hidden from the common mind. "This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them." How should they understand the meaning of such a parable? The simple words, "I am the Good Shepherd" give us the key to its profound significance, and enshrine it in our hearts as Christ's imaginative picture of himself in his relation to his faithful followers.

Somewhat similar to this, but with some difference both of picture and of meaning, is the parable of the lost sheep. Less vivid in details, it is noteworthy for its power of suggestion—for that power whereby the imagination stimulates the mind to conceive more than is actually presented. The words, "leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness," set the fancy at work in a remarkable manner with its own pictures of desert places and the flock wandering without a shepherd. Even more suggestive are the words, "go after that which is lost, until he find it." The lonely

and anxious wandering among the desolate hills shapes itself out to us in many details of our own imagining. One detail of the parable is finely conceived and beautifully definite: "When he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing." Here again is the touch of tenderness which makes the picture so affecting. In this case, Christ makes his interpretation almost a part of the parable: "Even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance." The same lesson is illustrated by the parable of the lost pieces of silver, and is involved together with other meanings in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

A parable of very different quality is that of Lazarus and Dives. It is fuller and more elaborate, and yet very brief considering all that is compressed into it. It is especially noteworthy, from the point of view of imagination, for its vivid pictures and for the striking contrasts between them. First, there is the picture of "a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." Then—also struck out in a single sentence—the contrasted picture of "a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." Then come the swift transitions. "The beggar died, and was carried

by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." Then, two pictures from the other world, flashed out in sudden and vivid contrast with each other and with the pictures of the earthly life. "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." Here is both concrete presentation and far-reaching suggestion. The rest of the picture is terrible and infinitely pathetic. The wailing cry: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." The pitying but inexorable response: "Son, remember . . . between us and you there is a great gulf fixed." The despairing entreaty: "Send him to my father's house." The pleading expostulation: "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." How they oppress the heart and overwhelm the imagination with their note of irrevocable doom and utter finality. There is no need here of interpretation. The parable bears its awful lesson so clearly and terribly written that he who runs may read.

In final illustration of the special point of Christ's imaginative power, let us choose the parable of the Ten Virgins. None is more beautiful, none more vivid and impressive. The general meaning is suggested in the opening words: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went

forth to meet the bridegroom." In a manner very characteristic, he introduces with few and simple words the necessary figures and the significant circumstances. "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Then follows the familiar story with its telling details. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." "At midnight there was a cry made." "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." "They that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." "Lord, Lord, open to us." "I know you not." How even the fragmentary sentences evoke those pathetic figures—in the outer darkness, with lamps kindled too late. Our hearts are touched with a sense of unavailing pity for these immortal types of human folly. More than the personages of the other parables considered, they leave an impression of human reality and individuality. Partly because of this, the final lesson comes home to us almost with the force of a personal appeal: "Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Instinct for Beauty

Every great artist has the instinct for beauty. In some, it may be merely an instinct for beautiful form. In others, there is a necessity that the idea itself should be beautiful; and probably the finest beauty of form is reached only where there is this inner

beauty of the thought. In some, there is a still deeper necessity—the necessity for that spiritual beauty which is the outcome of beautiful character and which is nowhere else so perfectly suggested as in the phrase of the Psalmist—"The beauty of holiness." There are men of genius who affect to rely upon sheer energy and effectiveness; but it is when they attain to beauty that they are most forceful and effective. Others regard the teaching of truth as the principal object of art; but their best service is to glorify truth by disclosing its beauty. Christ made the art of literary expression a great minister of truth; but his genius—as also his insight into truth—was too sure and just to allow him to be content with showing merely that truth was true. He must show that truth was more than true and that goodness was more than good—that both were infinitely beautiful—and that falseness and wickedness were forever ugly and found their appropriate symbols in darkness and brutishness and desolation. It is this instinct for beauty, uniting with the power of imagination to express human thought and feeling, that creates all great art. This makes Christ a great literary artist. The beauty of his work does not call for specific illustration. It is obvious everywhere and in almost all possible varieties. We have seen it in the exquisite fitness of his speech, in the loveliness of his diction and imagery, in the fine logical unity of his brief sayings and longer discourses. We have seen it in his

parables, where beauty of language is but a mere accessory to the larger and nobler beauty of conception. The parable of the Good Shepherd and the parable of the Ten Virgins illustrate a beauty unsurpassed, whether for mere expression, for glorification of truth, or for spiritual quality. One characteristic of this beauty, we cannot refrain from insisting upon—its simplicity. The beauty of Christ's work as a literary artist is not the beauty of the ornate, the gorgeous, the elaborate, but the beauty of the divinely simple and sincere. As we go forward, we shall have ample occasion to observe that the work of Christ, whatever its other characteristics, is clothed upon with beauty.

The greatest achievement of genius is the creation of character. To give life to a new and original personality—that is the supreme act of imagination. In the parable, there is comparatively little call or opportunity for the creation of character for its own sake or even for the sake of the truth to be taught. Christ's parables, too, are all comparatively brief, and afford little scope for developing the many aspects of personality. This field of literary effort, therefore, was not one which Christ much sought to cultivate. His personages are for the most part mere shadowy figures for the purpose of bringing out certain actions or incidents, mere types for the purpose of representing certain ideas. They are not distinct

Creation of Character

individuals. In the parable of the sower, the human figure is simply any sower of seed; the action, not the man, is important. Likewise in the parable of the lost sheep, although there are some distinct human touches, it is any shepherd who seeks for his sheep and "layeth it on his shoulders." The Good Shepherd is more definite; but this is chiefly because we feel the personality of Christ through the dim outlines of the imaginary personage. Lazarus and Dives take something of form to our imagination; but even they are little more than any beggar and any rich man. The ten virgins approach nearer to a realization of human personality, but so to say, as two groups rather than as ten individuals. What is true of these parables is true of practically all. They reveal power to conceive and portray character, and indicate that Christ might have created a wide range of personalities if he had chosen to display his full genius in this direction; but we can hardly say that in themselves they exhibited the conspicuous exercise of such a power. This is true, we say, of nearly all the parables; but yet, not quite of all. In some exceptional instances, Christ has gone beyond his ordinary range, and may be said to have carried his portrayal to a degree of definiteness and fulness which not merely suggests but actually demonstrates his genius for the creation of character. Most of his personages are like Everyman in the old Morality; but a few are something more, and stand out as real human

beings breathing the breath of life. In illustration of this, we may cite two of the very greatest of the parables.

The Good Samaritan

One of these is the parable of the Good Samaritan. It enforces the lesson of human brotherhood, and it has need of several representative figures. The first is "a certain man" who, on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, was set upon by robbers and stripped and beaten and left half dead. That is all we know of him. It is enough for the purpose of the parable, but it does not at all individualize the man. The next is "a certain priest" who saw the injured man and "passed by on the other side." He is a priest, and he has no compassion on human suffering. That tells us enough to make him a type of ecclesiastical selfishness, but gives only a glimpse of distinct personality. The third is "a Levite" who "came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." There is perhaps just a touch of difference in action and character, but nothing of essential importance. The Levite is simply another type of selfish indifference. Last comes "a certain Samaritan." There is a slight suggestion of individuality in "Samaritan," as in "priest" and "Levite"; but in this case, the suggestion is followed up with added details. As the important figure in the parable, the representative of kindly human helpfulness, the Samaritan is given something more of real human quality. He does in effect become more than a mere lay figure.

There is no description of character—only a few simple actions and a few simple words. The sketch is indirect and very brief. Yet it is sufficient to suggest many individual traits and to place before the imagination a living man who is also the immortal type of the divine law of love to one's neighbor. When we speak of "the Good Samaritan," we think of a real character whose figure is familiar among the great imaginary personalities of the world. Possibly our imagination is stimulated by the idea that the Samaritan is also a type of Christ, but the association is much less close than in the case of the Good Shepherd.

The Prodigal Son

Perhaps the greatest single literary creation of Christ is the parable of the Prodigal Son. From every point of view, it is a consummate piece of workmanship. The language is of unsurpassed beauty and power. The story is perfectly wrought, in its details, in the progress of the incidents, in the unity of narrative effect. The several scenes are vivid and lifelike pictures finely contrasted with each other. There is a variety and intensity of feeling comparable with that of a great drama. Through the picturesque features of the parable, shines out clearly its great meaning—the fourfold lesson of sin, of repentance, of love, of selfish jealousy. The three principal figures are all real characters. The Prodigal himself is Christ's greatest creation in this kind—at once a type and an individual. From his earlier actions, we see

him as pleasure-loving, eager for adventure and experience of life, impulsive, impatient of restraint, a careless and generous spendthrift, one easily tempted to sensual indulgence. He "hath devoured thy living with harlots," said the elder brother. When the time of want came, his impulse seems to have been to seek some form of honest labor, however humiliating, rather than to beg or steal. He was not entirely corrupt, not utterly degraded by his sin or by his destitution. There are depths in his nature and a core of goodness. He has the impulse to repentance and to a salutary humility, albeit his motive for return is not free from suspicion of self-interest. It is to his credit that he wished to go back to his father's house, to submit again to the old affectionate restraint. He has firmness enough of purpose to carry out his plan. Then his figure retires into the background and that of the father grows lifelike before us. He had yielded to his son's wish and allowed him to have his way; but doubtless his heart had never ceased to yearn over him in exile. Now, "when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." It is a picture infinitely touching, and sufficient of itself to make the father a living figure to the imagination. His love does not stop here. He says to his servants: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and

kill it; and let us eat, and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Everything is forgotten except that his son is here, and that he loves him. He is tender, too, toward his elder son. He went out "and intreated him." He pleaded with him in affectionate words: "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." How affecting are his repeated words, as though this was the one thought in his mind and he would fain make the elder son feel that this was the one consideration at such a moment—"this thy brother was dead, and is alive again." The elder brother is a somewhat ungracious figure, sharply contrasted with the father both in personal character and in typical significance. Yet he too has life and individuality. His anger, his sullenness, his jealousy, his bitter expostulation, his evident lack of brotherly affection, are well suggested. The three characters taken together make this the most dramatic of the parables and afford the best illustration of Christ's potential genius for the creation of personages which are actually living beings to the appreciative imagination. They unite with other features of the parable to make it unsurpassed in beauty and in that quality which is perhaps the distinctive mark of Christ's creative genius—the quality of sublime simplicity.

Character creation stands at the very summit of the achievements of human genius; but suppose that an artist could take an actual living soul and shape it according to his ideal—would not that be the supreme artistry? Genius can create imaginary character or can give vital interpretation to historic personality. What if it could rise to this transcendent spiritual art—to create or transform real character in real men and women, embodying in them the noblest and best that the imagination could conceive as possible for such material? Would not that be the divine art? The conception is a bold one, but not altogether fanciful. It has at least the authority of one of the very greatest of modern poets—one who possessed a marvelous genius for the creation and interpretation of character and had thought profoundly about the possibilities and limitations of art. In Robert Browning's "Pippa Passes," the poetic sculptor Jules has been tricked into marriage with a hired model, a girl stained in body but still pure and childlike of soul. As he stands smitten by the disclosure, thinking with blind rage only of revenge upon his brutal enemies and escape from the degrading entanglement—feeling that all the beauty of his life and the glory of his ideals is spoiled and contaminated—suddenly the idea is flashed into his mind that he may leave behind him all the ordinary ways of art and devote his genius to the shaping of this woman's soul.

The Artistry of Souls

> Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
> Be Art—and further, to evoke a soul
> From form be nothing? This new soul is mine.
> Stand aside—
> I do but break these paltry models up
> To begin Art afresh.

There is the unmistakable conception of soul artistry. It is as though this spiritual poet were standing upon the very borderland of merely human genius and yearning to be emulative of the divine artist who has embodied his thought in the myriad forms of nature, from flower to sun, and in the countless multitudes of his human souls.

Is it too much to say that what Robert Browning here conceives, Christ had already done? Did not his great imagination dwell most of all upon the possibilities of human character under the influence of his transforming touch, and was it not his supreme effort to have these ideals realized in human lives? Was he not seeking to express himself through the embodiment of his ideals in the characters of men? In a word, Christ was an artist in living character. Here was his greatest field of artistic achievement. In the ordinary ways of genius, we have seen in him some of the very greatest qualities. In this higher field, his genius is unique. Some analogy may be found in the work of a great teacher with his pupils or in the influence of a mother upon her children; but where should we find one who in this form of genius could bear a moment's comparison with

Christ? Even in its ordinary examples, it is a very high and noble form of artistic achievement. In him, it rises to a degree of power which sets him at the very pinnacle of the world's genius. This is the highest kind of art, and in this kind, he is the world's unquestioned master. He surpasses all others, alike in conception and in execution.

The evidences of Christ's workmanship in character are to be observed in the record of his life. Many who were brought into contact with him but for a moment felt the impress of his transforming touch. He put his stamp upon them forever. Witness the woman of Samaria, the woman who wiped his feet with her hair, the Syrophœnician woman, Zacchæus the publican, and the many whom he healed. Some were privileged with a more intimate companionship, and upon these his influence was profound. How deeply he must have affected the character of Mary the sister of Lazarus. The apostles, of course, were those upon whom his influence was most intimate and continuous. They were chosen from the common walks of life. They were without culture or wide experience. Doubtless they were men of native ability and character, but there is no indication that they were previously regarded as at all exceptional. Apart from their relation to Christ, probably none of them would have been heard of in the world. Four of the greatest were common fishermen; one was a receiver of taxes. Out of

such material, he made men whose names are forever memorable in human history—writers of Gospels, of Epistles, of the Revelation; saints and martyrs and heroes; great preachers, healers, missionaries. One of them he called Peter, the Rock; two he surnamed Sons of Thunder; one was called Simon the Zealot. One, alas, had a flaw in the stuff; and Judas Iscariot is forever Judas the Traitor. In the artistry of character, the perverse human will can thwart even the divine purpose. How inevitably, too, character is destiny. Judas, admitted to heaven and the companionship of his master and his fellow apostles, would slink away with downcast eyes from the hell of those recognizing glances.

One who never saw Christ in the flesh is yet to be numbered among the very greatest apostles. A large part of the New Testament was written by his hand. No man ever more than he felt the transforming influence of Christ. That influence is measured by the difference between Saul the persecutor and Paul the Apostle. The case of Paul is unique. A man of power and ability, he felt that he was doing God service by persecuting the Christians even unto the death. On the road to Damascus, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven," and he "heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The sudden transformation is indicated by his response: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The great life which followed was full of

labors and perils and sufferings and achievements for the Christian faith. Among all the saints, there is none greater than he who was once "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord."

Christ has never ceased to be a real presence and power in the world, shaping and molding men into great, individual, unique personalities. Whether we call it a supernatural and divine power, or simply an enduring influence like that of any other great creative genius, the fact itself remains to be reckoned with. It is a stupendous fact, involving a kind and degree of influence such as no one else has ever exerted. Other men have left behind them the potent influence of their thought, their imaginative creations, their character and lives; but in the case of Christ, there is something more to account for than example and inspiration. Men feel his presence as something personal and operative. They have the sense of going back beyond his words and the record of his life to receive an original impulse from himself. No one else has ever left his personality so permanently in the world. Men claim an experience similar to that of Paul. They have seen a light, they have heard a voice, they have answered, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Then they have lived a life which showed the reality of that influence. This presence of Christ is still powerful, beyond all other influence of man, to make character. Some of the greatest personalities of

history have been shaped by him. Men and women are still ordering their lives daily with a sense of doing his will and realizing his ideals. These are the evidence of his genius as an artist in character—the great gallery of his creations. His workshop is still open, and other masterpieces are still being produced in infinite variety but with the same informing ideal. As new lives grow into beauty and power under his transforming touch, they say with John: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Christ had the artist's vision of beauty which he realized in his wonderful sayings and discourses and illustrations and parables. He had his vision of ideal character which he has realized and is still realizing among men. He had still another vision which has yet been only imperfectly realized. It is the vision of a kingdom of God, of society and civilization transformed according to his ideal. It is the vision for whose realization he taught men to pray: "Thy kingdom come." It is the world's vision of all visions, its sublimest and most stupendous of all conceptions; and its accomplishment in fact is the art of all art. Slowly, as the long centuries roll on, it is coming to its realization. The structure was planned by the Master of all artists; and under the inspiration of his felt and abiding presence, all who love and follow him,

The World Vision

"as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

"Never man spake like this man." As we consider the whole range of Christ's literary genius, coupled with what must have been the more than eloquent effect of his personal presence and voice, do we not find the saying justified even in the broadest sense? In any adequate judgment of literary values, thought can not be separated from expression; and if we weigh the two together in the case of Christ, shall we not have reason to set him above all other men of creative genius? Even clearer is his supremacy in the expression of himself through the medium of living character. Never man thus molded men and women into the likeness of his own ideal. Here he found the perfect medium of expression, more receptive and more responsive and more significant than mere forms or colors or sounds or words.

Supreme Genius for Expression

Our thought is carried out beyond all bounds of genius. Of him who possessed such supreme gifts of utterance, it is said: "In the beginning was the Word." It is a claim that he himself is God's uttered word—his eternal and incarnate voice. With this voice, God spake in creation, expressing his thought in the language whose syllables are the objects of nature and the souls of men. Likewise, of him who possessed such power to mold character as a sculptor molds his statue, we are called upon to think as being himself God's supreme

The Divine Artist

model of life and character. Through him, God displays his ideal for man; and through him, he works in shaping man after that spiritual pattern. He is the effective instrument of God's purpose in the creation of character, as he was the effective word of God in the creation of the world. He is the uttered word of God; he is the manifested character of God. He is God's voice; he is God's person. Such claims are an appeal to faith; but they are also based in some sense upon an appeal to reason. Having heard what Christ has said and having seen what he has done in molding men, having listened to his word and having observed his character, the mind is impressed with a sense of overwhelming greatness, and is impelled toward the act of faith which bows before something more than human genius and exclaims with the apostle: "The word was with God, and the Word was *God.*"

III

THE GENIUS FOR ACTION

THERE is a mode of genius which may be called the genius of the executive mind. It is the genius for action, the genius for effective deeds. It produces the soldier, the statesman, the reformer, the captain of industry, the builder of empires, the leader of men, the pioneer of civilization. To this order of genius belong such men as Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon and Luther and Cromwell and Washington and Lincoln and all of those who have shaped the course of history by their definite achievement. They must needs be men of ideas in order to be really great; but it is their peculiar excellence that they have the power to translate their ideas, not into words or other expressive symbols, but into concrete actions which move the world and determine the current of events. In their case, genius is mingled with much of ordinary practical talent for the conduct of affairs; but it is the originality and inspiration of genius which sets them in the first rank among practical men.

A high degree of power and efficiency in action may be the outcome of a nature endowed with an immense store of vital energy. A man may be a

sort of physical and intellectual dynamo—eager, tireless, strenuous. He acts continually and powerfully because he is impelled to action by the irrepressible forces within him. Action is a joy, a relief, a necessity, an instinctive means of self-utterance. Such a man wreaks himself upon deeds as another wreaks himself upon expression. It is a wonderful endowment, this gift of vital energy in body and mind; but it is doubtful if it ever alone accomplishes the results of genius. It may be of immense service to the man of action; but it has not always proved indispensable, and it is capable of destroying itself and its achievements through the excess of mere force or through the blindness of misdirected zeal. Engines too powerful may shatter the vessel to pieces or drive it uncontrolled headlong upon the rocks. What is more important than energy, is purpose. An end finely and wisely conceived, clearly seen, tenaciously held, persistently sought, is the first requisite for genius in action. Purpose unifies, directs, controls, gives final and permanent value to separate deeds.

Motives of Action

Men of action differ from each other as to the essential nature of their purpose—as to its very spirit and moral quality. Perhaps the deepest and most important distinction is that between selfishness and unselfishness of aim. No reader of history can be unaware that some of the greatest of recorded deeds have been tainted, and in large measure defeated, by personal ambition and self-

seeking. The name of Napoleon is almost a synonym for greatly selfish achievement. Tennyson undoubtedly had him in mind as a contrast when he spoke of the Duke of Wellington as one

> Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
> All great self-seekers trampling on the right.

In Wellington himself, the poet sets forth one form of the unselfish purpose—the ideal of duty.

> He, that ever following her commands,
> On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
> Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
> His path upward, and prevail'd,
> Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
> Are close upon the shining table-lands
> To which our God himself is moon and sun.

It is a high purpose, but not the highest. It must yield to the ideal of beneficence. Perhaps the highest and most unselfish purpose of all is that which is inspired by the passion for righteousness and by the desire to have righteousness prevail in the world.

Modes of Action

Men of action differ, not only in their general spirit, but also very widely in their immediate object and in their capacity for particular modes of action. Some are essentially destructive, like the soldier; some are constructive, like the statesman. Some work in the field of private enterprise, like the man of business; some work in the field of public service, like the empire-builder. Some are

men of political action, like the politician; some are men of social action, like the social reformer. Some work with material things, like the engineer; some work with spiritual things, like the missionary. Each seeks his own way and his own field of operations, according to his own capacity, his own purpose, his own spirit. No man can work in all fields. Even if he were endowed with the power of action in all directions, the necessities of time and place and circumstance would compel choice and concentration. To make his powers really effective, he must direct them into some channel instead of dissipating them in a multitude of directions. Genius is likely to be effective in proportion to its intensity as well as in proportion to its strength.

That the deeds of Christ are among the great historic deeds of the world, there can be no question. He is, then, one of the world's great men of genius in the field of action. Just what place he occupies in that field is the matter which deserves consideration. How far his greatness was due to sheer vital energy seeking an outlet, we can hardly know. It is probable that he possessed such energy in large store, but not likely that it was a relatively important factor in his genius. What we can very surely know, is that one of the great factors was his life's purpose. Whatever energy he had was organized and guided and made effective by the sense of a great mission for which

Christ's Motive and Mode

it was worth while to live and to die. No shadow of self-seeking falls upon any action of his life. On the contrary, he was inspired by all the high motives which characterize the man of nobly unselfish purpose. He obeyed unswervingly a law of duty such as no other mind has so highly conceived. He literally spent his life in doing good. He worked and died that the will of God might be done on earth as it is in heaven. The particular modes of action which he chose are likewise clear. He was destructive only that he might be constructive; he worked, not in any field of private enterprise, but in the broad field of public service; he was a man of social rather than of political action; he dealt with the spiritual rather than with the material. He was neither soldier nor statesman nor reformer nor captain of industry nor builder of empire in any ordinary sense, although he had in some measure the qualities of these. His function was rather that of the missionary, the prophet, the religious teacher, the healer, the builder of a spiritual empire. Restricted to three years of time, to a small and comparatively remote territory, to a narrow historic stage, he began and carried forward a work which was to alter the currents of human history. For evidence as to the nature of that work and of the genius which it displays, our appeal must be to the life of Christ and its results.

The first thirty years of Christ's life offer only one incident which has any significance for our

present study, and that is his youthful interview with the doctors in the temple. It reveals his dawning consciousness of a great mission, his eagerness, not merely to learn and to reason, but to be doing something that might test his power for action. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Yet there is no impatience of the spirit which is impelled to act before its powers are developed or before the time is ready. After this momentary gleam from the inward recesses of his boyish nature, he returned with his parents to Nazareth, and "was subject unto them." His early life was probably one of conscious preparation for some great task, through humble and obscure obedience, through patient study and meditation. As he grew to manhood, there must have been an ever-increasing eagerness for the moment of action. Yet still he waited, expecting from within the conviction of readiness and from without the signal that the hour had come. We can imagine that he must often have felt something like what Milton expresses:

Years of Preparation

> My hasting days fly on with full career,
> But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.

Doubtless there was also the like spirit of obedient submission to the divine will. Certainly no life ever better illustrated that other great utterance of Milton:

> They also serve who only stand and wait.

It was a long period of preparation out of which were to grow the sublimest results. At last, the signal came; the time of waiting was over, and the great life of action began.

The beginning of Christ's public career was his baptism by John. Then he went alone into the wilderness. Here he faced such questions as meet every man who undertakes a great spiritual work. First, was he really the chosen messenger? "If thou be the Son of God." That recurring insinuation is the subtlest and profoundest of all temptations—the doubt of one's calling and sonship. If one can only be sure of that, he cannot utterly fail, even though he perish. Secondly, might he not prevail by miracle rather than by character? It is a temptation which the church and religious teachers have not always been able to resist. Christ was chary of the miraculous. His must be a true spiritual victory rather than one of supernatural compulsion. Thirdly, might he not best attain his purpose through concession and compromise and by using the ordinary means of worldly power? It was at bottom a choice between a temporal and a spiritual kingdom. At the very beginning of his career, he made the great decision of his life. Again and again, he was tempted by the disciples and by the multitude to seek temporal power and accept a worldly kingship; but his choice had been made once for all. He would be the builder of a spiritual empire in

Call and Decision

the hearts of men. It was a choice which his followers could not understand. His followers of later centuries have not always dared to trust to the attainment of spiritual ends by spiritual means. In his first decisive choice, Christ showed the inspiration and the insight and the originality and the courage of a great genius in the field of religious action. It was a decision which laid the foundations of his unique greatness as a leader of men.

His first active step toward the beginning of his work was an illustration of that power of leadership. He drew to himself five men whom he regarded as fit to be his first disciples and helpers. One of these was probably John the Apostle, who relates the incident but does not mention his own name. The second was Andrew, and the third was Andrew's brother, Simon. The other two were Philip and Nathanael. Here was displayed that quick and sure insight which characterizes the born leader. Christ looked upon Simon for one searching moment and named him forever—Peter, the Rock. Of Nathanael, he said: "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Men of very different temperament they were, but Christ saw in each a valuable instrument for his service. The incident also illustrates Christ's power to win men to ready allegiance. They felt his magnetic influence, and recognized his right to command. Not only so, but he made upon them the impression of a strength and sweetness so

majestic in their union that they hailed him at once as divine. Nathanael, who had said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" now exclaimed, "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." The witness of John the Baptist was confirmed by the presence of the great personality and by a few words from his lips. They who before had probably been John's disciples now became disciples of their master's Master; and they followed him in the assurance that whereever he was would be the centre of the new movement which they did not yet fully understand but which inspired them with undefined hopes for their land and their race and their religion. Christ returned with these chosen disciples to Galilee, where all of them had their homes. A brief sojourn at Capernaum—perhaps spent in quiet preparatory work and instruction while awaiting the favorable moment for more public action—closes this brief introductory period. Its chief events are the visit to John at the Jordan, the baptism, the temptation in the wilderness, the calling of the first disciples, and the return to Galilee. It was a period of beginning, of decision, of preparation and organization. It showed the man with capacity for great action; but as yet, everything remained to do.

Early Judean Ministry

The second period of Christ's ministry covers the time of his first public appearance at Jerusalem. He went up at the time of the Passover, and at once at-

tracted public attention by his first cleansing of the temple. It was a great symbolic act, setting forth the essential character of his mission. It asserted his authority, declared the sanctity of God's house, proclaimed the need of a truly spiritual religion. It attracted attention, but it also aroused opposition. The dragons of darkness which always begin to uncoil themselves at the advent of each new son of light were already awaking to guard their treasure. Christ was now known, but he was known to be hated by all who fear the light because their deeds are evil and by all the purblind children of formalism and tradition. With the boldness of genius, he had provoked the inevitable conflict in which his own earthly defeat was to lead to the triumph of his cause. Yet he was also prudent, seeing that the time for his great sacrifice was not yet come. He seems to have gone about in Judea for a time with his disciples, preaching and baptizing. When John the Baptist heard of him, he renewed his witness with the declaration, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Christ's growing popularity was objectionable to the Pharisees, and he thought it prudent to withdraw again into Galilee. Another reason was the news of John's imprisonment. It was a clear evidence of the growing hostility to the new movement, and Christ was not yet ready to share the fate of his forerunner.

Now began the comparatively long period of his Galilean ministry. It is commonly regarded

as falling into three well-marked stages, each with certain distinguishing features. The first stage was one of marked popularity and success. "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." In contrast with his welcome in other parts of Galilee, was the familiar incident of his rejection in his own home town of Nazareth. When he had read to them from "the book of the prophet Isaiah," and had said, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," their eyes "were fastened on him" in amazement and expectation. The quality of their wonder is implied by their question, "Is not this Joseph's son?" It was not the wonder of joyful acceptance, but the wonder of incredulous astonishment at such powers in one whom they had known for many years as the uneducated son of a carpenter, their fellow-townsman. "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." It was a severe rebuke of their lack of spiritual insight; and it so angered them that they attempted to cast him from the brow of the hill on which their city was built. "But he passing through the midst of them went his way."

First Galilean Ministry

The incident has a significance far beyond that of his rejection by his fellow-townsmen. It was a symbol of his great claims, of the purpose and meaning of his whole life, and of the rejection of

his message by his own race and by all who are unresponsive to the appeal of spiritual truth. The words, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," imply that there might have been immediate fulfilment of his purpose if it had not been for the unbelief and narrow hostility of those to whom the message came. It was apparently a purpose to regenerate society as well as the individual and to bring about a state of affairs where social justice should reign and "man's inhumanity to man" should be restrained. Christ saw that man makes society, but that society also makes man, and was seeking to establish a kingdom where each might help to better the other. Moreover, he was not merely stating a theory or expounding an idea. He was laying down a program which under proper conditions of human acceptance would be an entirely practicable one and which he sought to bring within the field of practical action and achievement. It was an illustration, not only of his genius as a thinker, but also of his genius as a leader in human affairs.

After the rejection at Nazareth, Christ "came and dwelt in Capernaum." Here he summoned Peter and Andrew and John to leave their fishing boats and follow him again, to become "fishers of men"; and to their number he added James, the brother of John. The work was growing on his hands. Multitudes thronged about him and the sick were brought to him in great numbers. His work as a healer gave him access to all sorts and

conditions of men and probably guarded his work as a preacher and teacher from the interference of the Jewish and Roman rulers. His life was one of constant and effective activity in these two directions, and through that activity, he was establishing his influence and authority as a great popular leader. His chief reputation at this time was probably that of the great healer; but this gave him opportunity to forward his loftier purpose as a physician of souls. This is doubtless the real importance and significance of his miracles from the point of view of his practical career as a man of action. His life was one of tireless effort, marked by great intellectual and spiritual energy.

Even into his moments of solitary prayer, the disciples intruded, saying, "All are seeking thee." His reply is significant: "Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also." He would not confine his labors to one place, with the idea of building up there a strong and compact and devoted following. His time was short, and he aimed rather to sow broadcast the seeds of truth for future harvests. He would not gather them in his lifetime, but he could sow them so deep and so far that they could never be rooted out by any persecution or by any other sowing. It was a magnificent illustration of utter devotion to a great cause, of far-sighted wisdom which looks beyond immediate results and reckons with the fact that the consequences of action do not cease with the

life of the actor. So "he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee." He was still seeking to turn his own people to his great world purpose. Only at the end was he to say: "Go ye into all the world."

This first preaching tour in Galilee is marked by several significant incidents. He healed a leper, and said: "See thou say nothing to any man." "But he went out, and began to publish it much." He healed a man sick of the palsy, and added: "Son, thy sins are forgiven." So far as men could receive it, physical healing was made the medium for spiritual instruction. They were willing enough to receive material benefit, but were defiant of his spiritual claims. It seemed blasphemy that he should declare forgiveness of sin. It was at this time that he called Matthew, a publican, to be one of his disciples. It angered the scribes and Pharisees that he should associate with "publicans and sinners." His answer to them has a suggestion of irony, yet it is an expression of the great purpose of his life: "I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." They found fault also because his disciples did not fast. Apparently their growing hostility was seeking every occasion for criticism, and their narrow formalism and spiritual blindness could not appreciate the large wisdom of his purpose.

Following these events, Christ went up to Jerusalem to a feast. There occurred the incident of the healing of the infirm man at the Pool of

Bethesda. "For this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath."

Visit to Jerusalem

They also "sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father." Persistently, by act and word, Christ was pressing his point. Only so could his purpose be advanced. The fierce opposition which he met foretold his own earthly defeat; but he was setting up a standard never to be taken down, and was ensuring victory through sacrifice. He said: "The very works that I do bear witness of me." That was their purpose; and although the witness was rejected then, the works remained to witness to all the future. Of similar import, was the plucking of the ears of corn on the Sabbath and the healing on the Sabbath of the man with the withered hand. He seemed determined to drive the lesson home. "And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him." It was evident that his work could not prosper at Jerusalem. As he still had many things to do before he was ready to yield up his life as the last effort for his great cause, he gave way for the moment like a wise strategist and returned again to Galilee.

The second period of his Galilean ministry began with increased popularity and success. Again he "went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the

kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria." Great multitudes came, not only from Galilee, but also from Jerusalem and all Judea, from Idumea in the far south, from Decapolis and the other regions beyond the Jordan, and even from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon in the far north. He withdrew to some extent from this pressure, as though he felt that this excessive popularity might precipitate before he was ready for it the final and overwhelming hostility. His work must be done so thoroughly that no human power could undo it even by his own destruction. He received those who came and healed them all, but he removed himself as far as possible from the press, and bade those who were healed "that they should not make him known."

Second Galilean Ministry

The important fact which marks the beginning of this period is the choosing of the twelve. Some, he had previously called. Now he joined to these Thomas and James the son of Alphæus and Thaddeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. These twelve he selected from the whole company of his disciples and made them apostles, "that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." Doubtless this was due to the increasing demands of the work. He needed men as present helpers and companions, men whom he could teach and train to carry on the work when

he was gone. The great executive mind works much through others, provides for many kinds of activity, and looks far into the needs of the future. Christ's genius for action showed itself in the insight with which he chose his workers and in the power with which he inspired other men to act.

It was at this time that he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, that wonderful declaration of the great underlying principles of his ministry. It had all the force of an effective deed. Here was originality instead of tradition, the direct influence of a strong personality instead of appeal to Abraham and Moses. "When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him." Typical miracles of this same time are the healing of the centurion's servant and the raising of the widow's son at Nain. The people were saying: "A great prophet is arisen among us." John the Baptist in his prison heard the wonderful reports, and sent to ask him: "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" The answer was: "Tell John the things which ye do hear and see." His daily acts were the witness of what he was. This was doubtless sufficient for John; but the scribes and Pharisees sought a sign. The sign of his character and his life and his works was not enough.

One of the vivid incidents of this part of his career is his preaching from the fishing boat to the thronging multitudes on the shore. How such a scene adds to the impressiveness of the great

group of parables which he spoke—the sower, the tares, the grain of mustard seed, the leaven. Following this is that striking experience of the storm on the sea of Galilee. It is a dramatic picture—the sleeping Master, the frightened disciples, the hurried awakening, the stilling of the tempest, the great calm. On the other side of the sea, they met with the terrible figure of the Gadarene demoniac. It is interesting to note that, in this remote place, Christ did not bid the man to hold his peace about his healing, but commanded him to go and tell his friends.

On his return to Capernaum, the multitude was awaiting him. He healed the daughter of Jairus and the woman who had an issue of blood twelve years and two blind men. "He charged them that they should tell no man." Yet "the fame hereof went forth into all that land." When he healed the dumb demoniac, "the multitudes marvelled." But the Pharisees said, "By the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." The hostility of his enemies was growing as well as his fame and popularity. This hostility is still further evidenced by the second rejection at Nazareth. Christ apparently could make no headway against the skepticism of his own people. They saw in him only the carpenter's son, and were offended at his wide-spread fame. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Still his great work went on. Still he went about through all the cities and villages actively

carrying forward his mission of preaching, of healing, and of laying deep and strong the foundations of his spiritual kingdom. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." It is a noble and pathetic saying, illustrative of the moving spirit of his whole life. He said to his disciples: "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few." It is the lament of all great workers in the cause of humanity or religion. Because of this increasing harvest, he at this time began to send forth the twelve by two and two on his own mission of preaching and healing. Their errand was full of fate. If any city should reject them, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city." What sublime resolution there is in his words: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." What sublime assurance, too, in the final triumph of the man who is willing to die for his cause. "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." The genius for action never rises higher than when a man can go calmly forward in the face of persecution and death, assured that he has planned and wrought so well that final defeat for his cause is impossible. His attitude receives a singular emphasis from the fact that he had just heard of the beheading of John.

In order to escape the pressing multitudes, Jesus took boat and went into a desert place to be alone. They "followed him on foot from the cities." Here in the desert, he fed the five thousand. "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain alone." Then, while the disciples were toiling back across the lake, "in the fourth watch of the night he came unto them, walking upon the sea." The well-known story furnishes one of the most striking scenes in his brief but stormy career. When he landed at Gennesaret, he found the multitudes awaiting him again and preached to them his wonderful discourse in which he said: "I am the bread of life." This was another offence to the Jews. They were willing to recognize him as a great prophet and healer, but they could not accept his high spiritual claims. "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." Jesus says sadly to the twelve: "Will ye also go away?" and again: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" These and other incidents seem to show that the hostility was increasing, that many of his followers were falling away, and that the scribes and Pharisees were becoming more disturbed and were hunting him out even in Galilee.

The third period of Christ's Galilean ministry was briefer. The beginning of it is marked by a journey into northern Galilee—"into the parts of

Tyre and Sidon." Then he returned around the eastern side of the sea of Galilee and "through the midst of the borders of Decapolis." Again, in the desert, he feeds the multitude. After these things, he crossed over the sea of Galilee by boat to the western shore, thus returning to the familiar scenes of his earlier labors. A little later, he made a journey northward to Cæsarea Philippi, and on his way, made the inquiries which led to the declaration of Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then came his own startling prophecy, "that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." Some six days after this, occurred the Transfiguration and the healing of the demoniac boy. No event of Christ's life is more typical of his mission as a divinely accredited messenger to men. On their return to Capernaum, he took occasion to teach the disciples a lesson of humility by setting a little child in the midst of them. The act was representative of his own spirit and conduct as well as of his doctrine. So also was the discourse on forgiveness which immediately followed. Both lessons have an added significance as coming in close connection with his prophecy concerning his own persecution and death. They foreshadowed his words of forgiveness upon the cross.

Third Galilean Ministry

Still for a time, "Jesus walked in Galilee: for he

would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him." He was urged to go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles, that his works might become more widely known. "For even his brethren did not believe on him." They wished to see the fuller demonstration and recognition of his official character. He bade them go up alone, and then followed them secretly. At the feast, there was much inquiry for him and much difference of opinion as to whether he was a good man or one who was leading the multitude astray. In the midst of the feast, he went up into the temple and taught. He created great astonishment and still greater opposition. The people said: "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?" The rulers indeed desired to kill him; but as yet they feared the people. As he continued to preach boldly, and many believed on him, the rulers tried to take him, but as yet he succeeded in evading them. Many said: "This is the Christ"; but others were sure that no prophet could arise out of Galilee. The mad fury of his enemies was baffled. He said to them: "Why do ye not understand my speech?" "Ye are of your father the devil." His speech was so bold and his rebukes so severe that they were bent on his destruction. "They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself and went

Visit to Jerusalem

out of the temple." It was the most dramatic moment of his career up to that time, and clearly foreshadowed what was to come.

After these events at Jerusalem, Christ again returned to Galilee, but only for a short time. His ministry there was ended, and he soon made ready for his final departure, having "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." His progress toward the final goal, however, was not a hurried one.

Perean Ministry

This period is known as that of the Perean ministry, because much of the time was passed in Perea, east of the Jordan. As usual "great multitudes followed him." Passing through Samaria, James and John, the "sons of thunder," wished to call down fire from heaven upon an offending village. They were conscious of power, and wished to use it in dramatic and effective manner. Christ's whole life is an illustration of different methods. It was without violence as it was without hurry. He was sure of his purpose, sure of his means, sure of the force which resided in his personality as well as in his acts.

It was at this time that Christ appointed the seventy, "and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come." The day of concealment and retirement was evidently past, and the time had come for the broadest and fullest proclamation. He was to be heralded everywhere on his final journey. The message was going forth for the

last time—for blessing or for woe. If it should now be rejected by his own people, the appeal would be to a broader audience. Christ had completed his preliminary work in such a manner that it could not ultimately be defeated. He had done all that was possible and was at last ready to force the issue and accept the results, whatever they might be.

At the Feast of the Dedication, in the winter, he was at Jerusalem. The Jews thronged around him in the temple in Solomon's porch, and said: "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly." Again he pointed them to his works as the witness of his character. Again they attempted to stone him, but once more he escaped from their hands, and "went away again beyond Jordan." "When the many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they trode one upon another," he warned them against the spirit of Pharisaism. He emphasized to them also in many ways the importance of the spiritual as compared with the material. His words put his adversaries to shame, "and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." The Pharisees told him that Herod was seeking to kill him, and advised him to go hence. His answer is full of courage and assurance and determination: "Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am

perfected. Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." Then follows the pathetic lamentation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem." It is a cry out of the heart, voicing all the tragedy of his life.

When Christ heard that his friend Lazarus of Bethany was sick, he said to his disciples: "Let us go into Judea again." It seemed to them like a rash procedure. "The Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" When he still insisted, and told them that Lazarus was dead, Thomas said to the others: "Let us also go that we may die with him." He probably voiced the feeling of all, that to go into Judea at this time was practically throwing their lives away. It is a note of despairing courage. The raising of Lazarus created a great sensation. Many of the Jews believed, but others "went away to the Pharisees, and told them." The result was a council, at which they said: "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." The high priest advised: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people." "So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death." Behind their hypocritical plea of expediency lay their gathered hate against the man whose works and ways had been such a bitter rebuke to their hypocrisy and formalism and lack of spiritual religion. Jesus again departed "into the country near to the wilderness, into a city

called Ephraim; and there he tarried with his disciples."

On his way back to Jerusalem for the last time, Christ was asked by the Pharisees, "when the kingdom of God cometh." Possibly the question was ironical—a mockery of his seemingly futile hopes. His answer was in harmony with all his teaching, and expressed unshaken faith in his mission. "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . the kingdom of God is within you." Only dense spiritual blindness could misunderstand such words. His blessing of the little children was another illustration of his conception of the spiritual kingdom. In the case of the rich young ruler, he laid his finger with tenderness upon the real difficulty which stood in the way of a spiritual life, and found an opportunity to emphasize again the contrast between spiritual and worldly riches. On this journey, Christ told his disciples clearly that he was going to his death. Yet even now they did not comprehend the full import of his words or understand the real meaning of his mission. They even thought that the temporal kingdom of which they dreamed was near at hand. The mother of James and John came asking that her sons might sit the one on his right hand and the other on his left in the kingdom which was about to be established. While they thus went their way, the people were already gathering at Jerusalem for the Passover. They were asking about

Last Journey to Jerusalem

Christ and questioning whether he would venture to come to the feast. "The chief priests and the Pharisees had given commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might take him." Yet, knowing well what was in store for him, Christ came on to Bethany six days before the Passover, and there awaited the moment for action.

The Passion Week

Christ was now on the threshold of the last brief but tremendous stage of his career—the week of his passion. He had been the great teacher and the great healer. He had stirred the life of his own nation to its depths and had gained the passionate love and hatred of many thousands. He had been the great shepherd of the people, filled with compassion for their human sorrows and striving with all the power of his magnetic influence to lead them into the fold of a spiritual religion. He had proclaimed a kingdom which was to rule in the hearts of men, and had been misunderstood by both his friends and his enemies. This life, so full of tenderness and compassion, so rich with spiritual vision and insight, so great in thought and action, had been a life marked by sublime courage but also by a wise restraint. "Fear them not, therefore," he said to his disciples; but at the same time he held back them and himself from anything like the blind zeal of the fanatic. Now the hour of his supreme trial was coming. He had foretold his death and resurrec-

tion. When the time was ripe, he had gone calmly forward toward the crisis. Now he was facing it with serene resolution. It had been a life full of interesting and dramatic events, full of vigorous action leading to the achievement of a great purpose. Now the last act of the mighty drama was at hand, and the stage was already cleared for the most momentous action in all the world's history.

Christ's public life had been a very short one; but it had been so crowded with busy activity and fast-coming events that we have the impression of a long career divided into many important periods. More than a fourth of the whole gospel record, however, is devoted to the last few days. Here the progress of events is so rapid and yet so full that it seems to comprehend the crises and contrasts and achievements of a lifetime. The periods are marked by days, almost by hours, and less than a week measures the space between Christ's apparent worldly triumph and his apparent worldly defeat. He knew how delusive was the one and how surely the other was his only road to success. As the days came and went, he met them with steadfast purpose, although each was big with fate. Without hurrying or swerving or delaying, he went about his final work, making each act in some sense a symbol of some part of his life and mission. Each day seemed to have a significance of its own by virtue of certain typical events.

Sunday was the day of triumph. It marked the enthusiasm of the people over his deeds and his person, their willingness to receive him as king and Messiah, their conviction that he was indeed the Christ. He might have seized upon the moment to save himself and establish his power. The movement was probably strong enough to sweep away the hostility of the Jewish rulers; but beyond this was the power of the Roman Empire which no Jewish uprising could have resisted. The chief objection was in Christ's own mind. A mere earthly kingdom was not worth the winning to him who sought to establish a spiritual kingdom over the hearts and consciences of men. He was willing to receive the great popular demonstration as a symbolic tribute; but he was not tempted by it to sweep along on the tide of popular enthusiasm toward an immediate but false success. As he rode amid the frenzied tumult, he presented the very type of meekness and simplicity. The scene must have been an amazing one. With spontaneous impulse of welcome and adoration, they cast their garments and their branches before him, waved their symbolic palms, and broke forth into glad shouts of triumph. "Hosanna to the son of David." The cry recognized his royal and Messianic character. It was also a cry of patriotic joy at the thought of a national deliverance from the hated Roman rule. The incident is also associated with Christ's profound sorrow over his rejection by his

Day of Triumph

own people. As he passed over the shoulder of the Mount of Olives and saw Jerusalem beneath him, he stood still and wept in the midst of that shouting multitude. In the background was the hostility of his enemies. They said bitterly: "Lo, the world is gone after him." "When he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred." It had been a day of splendid triumph, and among all the days of his life, it had been the one which had shown his power over men and also his power over his own spirit.

Day of Teaching

Monday was a day of teaching. The great act of the day was a symbolic one—the second cleansing of the temple. At the beginning and at the end of his ministry, he set forth by this definite and striking act what was his great purpose and mission in the world. In all his teaching, there had been the note of spirituality as contrasted with formalism and worldliness; and this lesson was particularly applicable to religion and religious worship. The act was a new illustration of his Messianic office. The very children cried out in the temple, "Hosanna to the son of David." The priests and the rulers were of course offended. They "sought to destroy him: and they could not find what they might do; for the people all hung upon him, listening." "And every day he was teaching in the temple; and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives."

Tuesday seems to be especially marked as a day of rebuke and warning. When he came into the temple on that day, he was asked, "By what authority doest thou these things?" His answer seems to bear the meaning that his works would have carried conviction of their own authority if it had not been for their spiritual blindness and perversity. This meaning also lies in the three parables of warning which he spoke at that time —the two sons who were bidden to go work in the vineyard, the husbandmen who slew such as were sent unto them, and the marriage of the king's son. They bore also this tremendous meaning: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." One of the features of this day was the discourse against the scribes and Pharisees, in which he repeated for the last time and with the greatest fulness and emphasis his utterance of woes against them. His saying concerning the poor widow's two mites seems to point a contrast to their pride and display. Their hostility brought the thought of his approaching sacrifice. "Now is my soul troubled." He saw clearly the doom which was now close at hand, but his soul was also set on the glory which lay beyond it and which could come only through his sacrifice. His soul was troubled by the fate of his own people. "Though he had done so many signs before them, yet they

Day of Rebuke and Warning

believed not on him." He was proclaiming his mission among them for the last time. For the last time, they were making their choice. After he had gone out from Jerusalem for that night to the Mount of Olives, he uttered to his disciples the great prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Then he said to them: "After two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified." Even then, the chief priests and the elders were taking counsel how they might capture and kill him. Even then, Judas was taking the thirty pieces of silver to betray him into their hands.

For Wednesday, there is no specific record. Thursday was a day of consolation. Christ was passing his last hours with his disciples, imparting to them his final words of comfort and instruction. He celebrated with them the Last Supper, in symbolic commemoration of his death. He gave the last lesson of humility by washing the disciples' feet. Then he dismissed Judas with the words: "That thou doest, do quickly." "They went out to the mount of Olives." It was the last night of Christ's earthly life. He bade them to love one another even as he had loved them. He spoke to them of the Comforter who should come after he was gone. How nobly beautiful was that last discourse, with its immortal sayings of consolation and exhortation. What sublime assurance of

Day of Consolation

spiritual victory through earthly defeat breathes in the closing words: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Then he prayed for them —"that they may be one, even as we are," "not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." It was a solemn hour, full of comfort and strengthening of soul, full of courage for the present trial and of hope for the long future with its labors and endurances and its ultimate victory.

Day of Suffering

It was now past midnight, and the last day had already begun—Friday, the day of suffering. He went with his disciples to the garden of Gethsemane, and there passed through his hour of supreme spiritual agony. He felt all the pangs of the man who is defeated and forsaken and misunderstood and hunted to shameful death. He felt the human shrinking of flesh and of spirit from the ordeal of his great sacrifice. He felt the inevitable temptation to yield before such awful trial. Yet down underneath this tempest of the wearied and tortured human soul, there were depths of untroubled calm from which arose the submissive and resolute cry, "Thy will be done." The great purpose must be accomplished at whatever cost—in this way if it might not be in any other. When he arose from his knees and wiped from his brow the bloody sweat of his agony, his spirit was quiet once more. His vision was clear, and henceforth there was no hesitation in his steps toward the

waiting doom. The tragic scene of the betrayal, with its lanterns and torches and weapons and its betraying kiss, was soon over. Unresisting, he gave himself into the hands of his enemies and was bound and led away. "And they all left him, and fled."

Christ's first trial was before Caiaphas, the high priest. "The chief priests and the whole council sought witness against Jesus to put him to death; and they found it not." The high priest asked him, "Art thou the Christ?" When he answered, "I am," they declared him guilty of blasphemy and worthy of death. So summary was his condemnation. Then they spat upon him and mocked him and buffeted him in their frenzy of malignant hate. The whole scene, with its background of Peter's denial and the unavailing remorse of Judas, is as pitiful as it is tragic. When the morning was come, they "bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him up to Pilate." Their accusation was framed to bring him within the condemnation of the Roman law. Pilate asked him, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Once more Christ bore witness, "My kingdom is not of this world." Pilate declared that he found no fault in him, but hearing that he was a Galilean, sent him to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem. Herod, disappointed in the hope of seeing a miracle, mocked him and arrayed him in gorgeous apparel and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate proposed to chastise him and let him go;

but the mob demanded his death. On Sunday, the multitude had shouted "Hosanna." Now the cry was, "Crucify him, crucify him." The contrast affords an impressive measure of the greatness of Christ's renunciation and of his devotion to his high purpose. Pilate delivered him up to them with the words: "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it." The mind shrinks with horror from the blind and foolish frenzy of the imprecation: "His blood be on us, and on our children." Then the soldiers stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe and crowned him with thorns and mocked him and spat upon and smote him. Beside his calm fortitude, how contemptible was the wavering cowardice of Pilate. The governor brought Christ out, thus robed and crowned, and they stood together before the multitude. "Knowest thou not," said Pilate, "that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" "Thou wouldest have no power against me," replied Jesus, "except it were given thee from above." It was the answer of one who has no fear of them that can kill the body, a perfect assurance of the ultimate triumph of spiritual over material forces. Pilate was trying to escape the consequences of his own act, but was afraid to recede from it. He sought to free Jesus, but did not dare to risk the imputation: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." So he delivered him up to them with the mocking insinuation: "Behold, your

King!" He could risk the taunt, but not the danger of acting according to his own conscience and conviction against their brutal fury.

Christ had finished the work of his life. It only remained for him to endure the last pang and to complete all by the accomplishment of his sacrifice. They led him out and crucified him between two thieves. How the whole spirit of his life gathered itself up into the words: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." They show him as great in his gentleness of spirit as in his power for action and endurance. He has a loving care, too, for his mother, stooping from his cross to commend her to his beloved disciple. The depth of his agony is suggested by the words: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" For a moment, he tasted more than the bitterness of death, the despair of a soul which feels itself forsaken of God and man. Only for a moment came that awful darkness over his soul; and then the light of courage and faith within him reasserted itself in his last exultant cry, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He had lived his life in the faith that spiritual good is the only real good. He had done his work in the confidence that spiritual forces must at last prevail. He suffered death in the assurance that what is spiritual is indestructible. He had tasted the extremes of popularity and of hatred. He had shown himself fearless and calm before his judges. In the hour of death, he had displayed mag-

nanimity and tenderness and courage and faith. Now, as he hung there dead upon the cross, even those who had reviled and crucified him said: "Truly this man was the Son of God."

The record concerning Christ concludes with the account of his burial, his resurrection, his various appearances to his disciples and others, and his ascension. All of these lie beyond the scope of an inquiry into Christ's career as a man of action during the brief period of his human life. The story of that career is the sufficient evidence of his genius for action. The deeds speak for themselves, and to their testimony we may add the impression which he made upon those about him. How full of action his life was is suggested by the concluding words of John's Gospel: "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which should be written." The record as it stands, whatever interpretation may be put upon it, shows a man supremely great in purpose and in power to achieve that purpose.

Supreme Genius for Action

The fact that Christ died at the hands of his enemies, apparently thwarted and defeated in his earthly mission, is no evidence of weakness or of shortsightedness. It is rather an evidence of the clearest vision, which could see ultimate victory through immediate failure and which could discern plainly that the real purpose could be

achieved in no other way—an evidence likewise of that supreme strength and courage and resolution which could deliberately lay down life itself as a necessary means to the foreseen end. There is no greater genius for action than that which estimates life in terms of possible accomplishment and which deliberately spends life for the sake of what life will purchase. Christ was never greater in action than during the last days of his life, when he was moving step by step toward his final sacrifice. Into that last week was gathered more of the history of the world than into any other week since the race began. Considered merely as an actual factor in the determination of historical movements, the action of that week must always hold a preeminent place in the record of human affairs.

The Far Results

Every man of action must be judged by the far results as well as by the immediate results of his life. Christ had a unique career. His life was filled with dramatic and interesting events. It was unique and wonderful in its large purpose as well as in its details. It was crowned by a sacrificial tragedy which has moved the pity and admiration of the world. It stirred profoundly the life of his time and left behind it a movement full of vital and enduring force. Yet all this is small compared with the age-long influences which have flowed from his deeds. During the brief period of his earthly career, he established the most potent of

all religions, and the progress of that religion has been continually inspired by a vivid sense of his personality and his example. He left behind him, not merely a system of doctrine and a form of worship, but the sense of a personal presence which makes him more alive to the imagination than any other figure in history. We must measure the force of his purpose, his plans, his deeds, his genius, by all that the Christian religion has done to influence the world. From this point of view, surely he is the greatest of all men of action. His deeds are still practically effective among men after the lapse of nineteen hundred years. Of what other man has the influence been so enduring and so vividly felt?

In the light of such considerations, once more the question presents itself to us, "What manner of man is this?" Are such achievements within the compass of merely human genius? Can we explain them on any other ground than that of faith in his divine nature? Here is the life; here also is the claim of a divine personality. When the men of his own time questioned him as to who and what he was, he pointed them to the witness of his works as a proof of his high claims. The appeal still stands. Judging him by what he has wrought in the world and by what has been wrought through him, what must we say of him? Napoleon is reported to have said: "I am an understander of men, and *He* was no man." Certainly the life

The Divine Worker

and deeds and influence of Christ have in them a suggestion of something superhuman. He was a great genius; but nothing that we know of genius gives us the full explanation of his achievement and his influence. We are awed in his presence as before something greater than humanity. We are amazed as we read of his recorded deeds, and our souls tremble into faith as we whisper to ourselves the words of his beloved disciple: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made which hath been made." He is man in action; he is God in action.

IV

THE GENIUS FOR RELIGION

THERE is a mode of genius which may be called the genius of the intuitive mind. It is the genius for spiritual insight, the genius for immediate perception of spiritual truth, the genius for religion. It produces the man of apocalyptic vision, the prophet, the priest, the mystic, the seer. To this order of genius belong such men as Moses and Isaiah and Paul and John and Augustine and Francis of Assisi and John Bunyan and George Fox and Emanuel Swedenborg and John Wesley and all those who have influenced the world as the revealers of God to men. In the case of such men, the word genius is to be applied only in its broadest sense. Their peculiar gift has in it something especially suggestive of divine inspiration and communion. Yet it is surely a human gift and one which they share in some greater or less degree with multitudes of their fellow men. As in the case of the other modes of genius, they differ from their fellows chiefly because they possess in extraordinary measure powers which are in some degree common to all. In their type of genius, they approach nearest to Christ, as in character they also suggest something of his union

of the human with the divine. Like him, they are prophets of the soul.

Christ, then, is one of the world's great prophets and religious teachers and men of religious insight. Here is his peculiar field—the field in which his most characteristic genius fully displays itself. Other forms of genius as manifested by him may be merely subordinate and incidental—largely latent, and displayed only so far as his special mission and purpose offered occasion for their use. This form of genius is most essential to his nature, most expressive of his human personality. Here he most truly reveals himself, in mind, in character, and in purpose. All his other powers are here gathered together to serve the demands of his highest nature and of his supreme life work. In this field, too, he best represents the genius of the Hebrew race. That race, above all others, has had the genius for religion and has produced the greatest men of the prophetic type. Rejected by his own people, Christ has nevertheless been the greatest embodiment of their essential religious spirit.

Christ's Essential Genius

In seeking to understand a prophet, it is natural that we should begin by trying to know and comprehend something of his spiritual message. In that, he expresses his thought, reveals his conception of religion, and also discloses much of his character and his quality of mind. It may not disclose him

Christ's Spiritual Message

to the depths, but it at least shows him on that side which he seeks to open up to the world's view. It is also to a large extent the measure of his influence and his practical service to mankind. In the case of many religious teachers and preachers, the message is the matter of chief importance. The man is a mere voice, and his teaching is the thing of substance. This is least true in the case of Christ. In him, more than in any other of the world's great prophets, it is the personality that counts rather than the doctrine. Supremely great as his teaching is, the teacher is far greater. Nevertheless, we need to weigh Christ's message as a means of estimating his genius, and we could probably find no better point of beginning. That message is immensely important in itself, as containing the essential principles of the Christian religion, and it is that which will perhaps give us the best approach to the living personality from which the message takes its highest value. For the present purpose, it will be sufficient simply to indicate some of those large and significant features of Christ's teaching which are most truly characteristic and representative of his peculiar message.

Certain of the discourses of Christ are especially significant for the purpose of suggesting the fundamental principles of his teaching. One of the earliest of these is the well known conversation with Nicodemus. Here is unfolded Christ's doctrine of the new birth. "Ye must be

born anew," or perhaps rather, "Ye must be born from above." It was a strange and mysterious doctrine to this learned Pharisee and ruler of the Jews. It seemed to him like an incomprehensible paradox. He was startled and disturbed by it, and no wonder. It was one of the most amazing doctrines ever proclaimed in the world, a doctrine to change man's whole conception of the nature of the religious life, a doctrine to puzzle and confound the worldly wise, a doctrine to be understood only as the soul should experience the vital change of the new birth. Certainly here was evidence of the originality and the insight which we ascribe to genius. It was a flash of new light upon the great religious problem of the ages. It was more than a new doctrine; it was a new channel of life. So far as this new teaching might be really true, its acceptance meant the sweeping away of that whole conception of religion which makes it consist of formal and mechanical worship, of mere propitiation of superior powers, of certain outward modes of conduct. True religion, according to Christ, involves the birth of a soul, the origin of a new nature.

The New Birth

Not less interesting and significant is Christ's message to the Woman of Samaria. Sitting by Jacob's well, the Master uses it as a symbol of the power of true religion to quench the thirst of the soul. It is not something merely external which can

Spiritual Religion

still the craving for a moment only to find it ever recurring, but it is rather like a perpetual living well springing up within the soul itself and keeping it ever refreshed. The woman is eager for further knowledge as to where and how this spiritual refreshment is to be found. Where must the true God be truly worshipped? Then comes that other great revealing word: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." That was not absolutely a new idea. Yet it was an idea which the world had practically forgotten and which it is ever prone to forget in practice even while asserting it in theory. Even among the Jews, the spiritual worship of a spiritual God had come to be little more than a religious dogma. Christ reasserted it with revealing emphasis; and since that hour, it can never be permanently forgotten. It may be obscured, as it has been many times; but those two figures by the well cannot be altogether obliterated from the religious thought of men. The idea is fundamental to all religious truth; and among all the prophets of the world, Christ is its great assertor and maintainer.

Under a similar figure, he spoke to the multitude about similar truths. He told them of the "bread of life" embodied in himself. What he wished to impress upon them was the fact that spiritual truth is the real sustenance of the soul, and that such truth was enshrined in his teaching, in his life, and in his personality. When they

rebelled at the seeming arrogance of his claim, when even his disciples called it "a hard saying," he replied: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." That was the underlying truth which he would have them understand. He was preaching a spiritual God, a spiritual worship, a spiritual religion, a spiritual life. In this sense, at least, he was offering to them the bread of life in and through himself, just as he had offered the water of life to the Woman of Samaria at the well. There is no greater religious teaching than that which effectively insists upon the essential spirituality of life and of religion. It is Christ who has done most in the world to convince men of that supreme truth and persuade them toward its realization.

Spiritual Freedom

Another great phase of his spiritual message is to be found in his discourse on spiritual freedom. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The doctrine is an illustration of his genius as a great thinker; but it is no less important as a part of his message as a great spiritual revealer. Knowledge of the truth and intellectual freedom in the pursuit of truth are an essential part of genuine religion, but so also is the freedom of the soul. Truth is not meant to bind man to a formula, much less to a system of rites. It is meant to deliver the soul from error and from superstition and from fear, and to set

it free for progress toward further truth and toward God in whom all truth finds its ultimate harmony and final meaning. A great step has been taken in the realm of religion, whether as thought or worship or conduct, when men have been taught that truth is not bondage but liberty, not something to fear but something to seek with ardent desire and to welcome with joyful spirit. Henceforth, religion may be a growth and not a crystallization. That which itself is the essence of truth cannot be in conflict with truth of any kind or degree.

Christ taught his disciples the duty and the privilege and the necessity of prayer; and he said: "When ye pray, say Our Father." Never two words have fallen from human lips which have taught men more than these. They contain the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God. God is a father. Nothing can be said as to his relation to man which that has not already included or implied. There is suggested his love, his providence, his forbearance, all that human minds can comprehend of his divine nature. How much is added by that one word to all that the world had thought of him before. How much is given for the world to put to the test of infinitely varied experience. How much is suggested for the mind and the heart to explore forever as they enter more and more deeply into the mysteries of the divine communion. Then, he is *our* Father—the

Our Father

father of all men. In spite of all differences of race and creed and character and social condition, we are brothers, of one blood and one family. All religion is bound up in the thought and the practice of a common brotherhood of men worshipping in spiritual sincerity and in the freedom of the truth a God who is also a father.

In this prayer and elsewhere, Christ teaches the religious duty of forgiveness. All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. They have need of the forgiveness of God because of their transgression against him. This forgiveness is a blessed possibility, but it is bound up with the obligation to forgive those who have done wrong to us. A right relation to God is made to rest upon a right relation to our fellow men. Here, as elsewhere, Christ's revelation of the elements of true religion is profound and far-reaching. The doctrine, however, bears its own sanction. However otherwise man may have conceived his religious duty, he cannot doubt, when it is once presented to him, that this is indeed the truth of the matter. If God is indeed the father of all men, and if we must worship him as a father, then of a surety he who loves God must love his brother also, and he who would be forgiven of God must recognize the obligation to forgive his brother.

Duty of Forgiveness

As the revealer and expounder of a spiritual religion, Christ was naturally and necessarily a teacher of faith. That is the path by which the

spiritual world is approached. That is the way by which man enters into the spiritual life. That is the secret of all spiritual power.

The Lesson of Faith

In many ways and on many occasions, Christ taught the great lesson of faith—by word, by deed, by example. It was fundamental in his teaching, for it was the only method by which men could appropriate the treasures of spiritual truth which he unfolded to them. From his teaching and his life, we may learn that faith is one of the great laws of life, one of the primal human instincts, one of the natural human powers, one of the great necessities of man's existence, one of the great functions of the life of the soul. "Lord, increase our faith," said his disciples. "If ye have faith," he replied, "as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea; and it would have obeyed you." He was unfolding to them the secret of his own power. It was the way in which his own mighty works were accomplished, the means whereby his religion is still a force in the world.

The Sermon on the Mount is central, not only in Christ's system of thought, but also in his system of religious teaching. It is filled with the very spirit of the religion which he preached. It contains many great declarations of religious truth; but its chief significance as an illustration of Christ's

Spirit and Form

genius for spiritual insight is to be found in its underlying tone and purpose. Through all its separate teachings, runs the great idea that in religion and in all life the spirit must be valued above the letter. Unless that is thoroughly understood and accepted, all Christ's teaching and all other religious teaching is made vain and ineffectual. There is no other lesson which goes deeper into man's religious life, no other lesson which men have greater need to learn and to practice. There is no other point in which religious truth has been so often perverted and defeated. Religious truth is thwarted and overcome, not by opposition, not by any weakness of its own or by the superior strength of any power arrayed against it, but by losing the spirit in the form. There is the fruitful source of religious weakness, of religious dissensions, of the failure of religion to make its power manifest in the hearts of men. It was the lesson upon which Christ laid the greatest stress, it was the lesson which he especially needed to enforce upon the men of his day, and it was the lesson for which they crucified him. All else they could have endured and forgiven; the one thing which they could not tolerate was the fact that all his words and all his life were one withering rebuke of the hollowness and futility of their religious professions. They had turned the truth of God into a lie, not by denying it or opposing it, but by mummifying it into lifeless forms and traditions.

There is no point at which Christ more clearly shows himself the inspired prophet and the man of profound spiritual insight than in his insistence upon the fact that religion is a life and not a form and that religious truth remains truth only so long as it is understood and accepted in its spiritual rather than in its literal interpretation. Always we need to be brought back to the truth that "the just shall live by faith," and not by form or ceremony or creed or profession.

Much of Christ's greatest religious teaching is unfolded in his parables and is made vivid and effective by the concrete and picturesque form of presentation. Each of the parables is the statement or the repetition in varied form of some great fundamental truth. One of the richest of all is the parable of the Prodigal Son. There is embodied Christ's doctrine of sin; and if we had no other word of his, that graphic and significant picture would enable us to understand his conception of sin and of man's condition as a sinner. There also is his doctrine of repentance, his great teaching that man may turn from his sin and find his way back into the path of righteousness. There also is his doctrine of the divine readiness and willingness to forgive, his revelation of the infinite love and pity of God which is eager to pardon the soul that truly repents of its rebellion against him and forsakes its evil ways and which

Sin and Salvation

is quick to recognize the returning sinner at once as a son.

Something of this same teaching is embodied in the parable of the Lost Sheep. It declares and illustrates that there is "joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Each individual soul is precious in the sight of God, and the infinite heart of love is made glad when even one is brought back to the fold of the great shepherd. That is a thought full of religious comfort, the thought of one who had deep insight into spiritual mysteries and intimate communion with divine realities. It was a significant revelation of God's ways with men, and it was a revelation likewise of Christ's own character, so profoundly in sympathy with all the infinite love and tenderness and pity which he revealed as existent in God.

This doctrine of God's love has its human counterpart. The highest duty and the largest privilege of man is also love. If faith be the road to religious truth, love is the essence of the religious spirit. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." There has been and there can be no greater or profounder religious teaching than that. It is the condensed expression of all religion, on the side of its life and spirit. It points the way to the fulfilling of all religious law that is or ever shall be. It is a marvelous

Love to God and Man

compendium of all that has ever been said in the law and the prophets, a gathering up of the meaning of all commandments into the single and all-embracing law of love. It reaches down below all particular religious duties, to the great underlying principle which is the basis and the spirit of all duty. It solves "all problems, in the world or out of it." As always in Christ's teaching, we have here an interpretation of religion which penetrates beneath the surface to the profound depths and which lays emphasis upon the spirit rather than upon the mere form.

The Kingdom of God

Christ spoke again and again of a Kingdom of God and foretold its coming in the world. Here also by his literal interpreters, he was misunderstood. They could conceive of a kingdom only in terms of external fact—of king and throne and crown and sceptre and army and organized government. He was thinking of a spiritual kingdom, ruling in the hearts and minds and consciences and lives of men. "The Kingdom of God is within you." They thought of power and force. He thought of purity and obedience and affection. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." They thought that the Kingdom of God must come with visible pomp and display. He said: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." He was concerned with the spirit of divine rule; they with the dead letter. Later

generations have seemed to err in an opposite direction. They have interpreted Christ's words to means that the Kingdom of God was concerned only with the conversion and regeneration and salvation of the individual soul, and have fostered an ideal of religion which has led men to seek the seclusion of the monk's cell and the hermit's cave in order that they might be able to save their souls alive by escaping from the snares and temptations of the world. It was an error almost as fatal in many of its consequences as that of the Jews. There is in reality no such way of escape from sin unless we could escape from ourselves, no such way of salvation unless we could be saved from ourselves. We are coming to see more clearly now—what ought always to have been sufficiently clear in the teaching of Christ—that we can save ourselves only by helping to save the world, and that Christ intended to regenerate human society through the regeneration of individual men and women. His kingdom was meant to rule as a spiritual force, though not as an ecclesiastical dominion, over all human affairs and over all the relations between classes and nations and races of men. It was meant to inform and inspire all human institutions and bring an answer of fulfilment to the prayer that the will of God might be done on earth as it is in heaven. His kingdom is to come in courts and cabinets and parliaments and markets and workshops as well as in homes and closets and churches.

A great religious teacher has not only a message of spiritual truth. In proportion to the genuineness and depth of his insight, he is also an actual revealer of God to men. Something of this we have already incidentally seen in the study of Christ's teaching; but it calls for more direct consideration. Christ said with all boldness: "I know him." It was a declaration, not merely that he knew the truth concerning God, but that he knew God as a personality, that he stood in relations of intimate acquaintanceship with that personality, and that he had therefore the power to reveal that personality to those who had not yet learned to know him. It is this that men most of all need to know. Truth, as a matter of principle and law and theory, is something to be sought with all earnestness and to be welcomed wherever it is found; but the soul of man is not content to stop there. It desires to penetrate through the truth to the infinite being who is the author of all truth and of all existence, the soul of the universe which he has made. Man seeks a presence and a person, and is not satisfied with anything short of that. He desires to know not merely the thought but the thinker, not merely the thing made but the maker, not merely the principles and laws of life but the Living One himself. Religion is not merely a philosophy; it is still more a communion. It is this craving which Christ understands and satisfies. He seems to

Revealer of God

say: "I know him, and so far as it is possible for you to follow my revelation, I will make him known to you." Much of his teaching is an endeavor to unfold to men the will of God. He seeks to make men know what that will is on all the important matters of man's relation to God and to his fellow men, and then he seeks to make that will prevail on earth as it does in heaven. He urges obedience to the will of God, not merely because it represents power and authority or because it is a great and necessary law of conduct, but because it is the beneficent will of a divine personality. He declares that will in such a way as to make known through it the great essential elements of God's character. In still other ways, and more directly, he seeks to have men know something of the nature of God. "God is a spirit." God is a father. God is love. God is all-wise, all-beneficent, all-merciful. God is eternal and everywhere present. God is infinite. God is just. God is holy. God is patient. God has an interest and care which includes all his creatures. Such are some of the great essential attributes of the Creator from which flow so many lesser consequences. There is no inconsistency or lack of harmony in his revelation. When God's nature has thus been set forth, the picture is convincing. We feel that this is what he must be in order to be God. Christ has gathered up all that was most significant in the teachings of the past and has added to it in such a way as to

give it unity and completeness and vitality. As it comes from him, the revelation is new and unique. Above all, we feel that he has seized upon the very spirit where others had grasped only fragments of the letter and the form. Others had taught truths concerning God; Christ taught the truth.

One of the deep secrets of Christ's subtle insight into the nature and meaning of the spiritual life and of his vital sympathy with the infinite soul of things lies in his habit of frequent and intimate communion with the divine spirit. There was in his case more than the subtle and profound thought which is able to deal with great religious problems, more than the spiritual insight which is the marvelous endowment of the highly gifted religious nature, more even than the tact of soul which is possible only to spiritual sensitiveness and spiritual sympathy. He had also the habit and the faculty of divine companionship. In a truer and fuller sense than could ever be said of any other, he "walked with God." He dwelt with God in a close and living communion. If one may venture so to express it, he was familiar with God. In such intimate contact and relationship, all his powers of religious genius—his thought, his insight, his sensitiveness, his sympathy—had full scope and opportunity for exercise. He was supremely fitted to be a channel of divine revelation, but he was likewise a channel always open and always in full connection with

the fountain-head. In revealing truth simply as truth, intellectual and spiritual powers may be sufficient unto themselves; in revealing the divine personality, it is necessary not merely to know of him but to know him. To reveal God, there must be divine acquaintanceship. In connection with Christ's mission as a religious teacher, this is a record of the utmost significance: "He went out into the mountain to pray: and he continued all night in prayer to God." Undoubtedly Christ's daily life was a perpetual divine communion; but he had also his hours of solitary and absorbed companionship with the Father. In the daily experience, he learned much of God's ways and works; but alone with God in the silent privacy of the night and the solitude, he entered most deeply into the solemn mysteries of the divine nature. In the lonely communion of Gethsemane, he entered into the very inner chamber of the divine presence and gathered the divine strength for his last Godlike sacrifice.

Life and Deeds a Revelation

Christ was a revealer of God through his sayings and discourses and parables; but his life and his deeds were also a continual revelation and message. In its large spirit and purpose, his life showed his conviction as to what God really was; and every separate act was an illustration of one side or another of God's nature. Consider the significance of his long ministry of healing as an evidence and illustration of the divine compassion.

The chief purpose of his revelation of the divine character was to make men feel and understand that God is love. He illustrated that by many single acts and by the whole tenor of his life. He illustrated it most of all through his death. There is nothing greater for men to believe. Saying it was not enough. Even illustrating it by a thousand tender and compassionate deeds was not enough. Christ must die to make men really feel it. He must offer them the last convincing proof. When they saw him on the cross, they knew that he was so utterly sure of the truth of his revelation that he was willing to die for it. Above all, they actually saw him as an example of the divine love dying to save the human creature. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." It is the supreme test. Yet here was Christ illustrating the measure of God's love by laying down his life for his friends—and for his enemies.

There is probably no single incident of Christ's life which is a more significant symbol of his whole mission as a divine messenger than the Transfiguration. On the top of the mountain, he enters into the divine presence and enjoys the heavenly vision and the spiritual communion. There also he imparts to his favored disciples—those who were nearest in spirit to his own exalted level—something of his own sacred experience. They felt that it was good to be there, and wished to remain with him in the continued en-

joyment of that blessed state. They were content with the vision of glory, and in their exaltation, were ready to forget the world and all its need. But Christ remembered. There were others whom he must also bless. These could not enter into the great spiritual experience with its richness of divine revelation, but they could receive in their own way and measure something of the divine comfort and help and blessing. To them also he would reveal God in such manner and degree as might be possible to their lower understanding. So we find him presently at the foot of the mountain, healing the demoniac boy and teaching the power of faith. He was the mediator between God and man, bringing the divine presence near to high and spiritual souls, but bringing him also as near as was possible to those who were dull of vision and slow of understanding.

Genius for Character

The genius for religion is essentially a genius for character. No depth or fineness of intelligence, no breadth or accuracy of knowledge, no range or variety of experience, no rareness of intuition, no sensitiveness of feeling, no subtlety of spiritual insight, can suffice for the understanding of God. These are useful instruments and servants, they may help a little on the way; but in order really to know God, one must be like God. The degree of that likeness is the measure of understanding. Only holiness can comprehend holiness; only love

can comprehend love. Christ himself laid down the great law of spiritual knowledge when he said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Men have instinctively felt the truth of his principle and have ever been inclined to refuse their credence to religious teachers whose lives did not give evidence of religious character. They have felt truly that none could rightly speak of God any revealing word who were not near to him in the likeness of their own souls. The lesson is embodied in the greatest of the world's legends. To Sir Galahad alone was vouchsafed the vision of the Holy Grail—that mystic spiritual symbol—because his heart was pure. The lesson is embodied also in the most beautiful story of history. It was the spotless maiden spirit of Joan of Arc which was privileged to commune with kindred spirits among the fields of Domremy.

It is in Christ that this law of spiritual vision through the spiritual nature finds its most wonderful exemplification. He was the world's supreme spiritual personality, the world's greatest character. There is no other like him of whom there is any record in the pages of history. There is no other like him in the charmed legends of romance or among the creations of the masters of imagination. He is the world's matchless soul. Therefore is it that he of all men has had most power to understand God, the greatest genius for religion.

Character Understands God

He approaches God along the line of personality. He not only apprehends the idea of God; but he feels by personal contact and through personal likeness the very person of God. This is the most intimate of all knowledge—this knowledge of soul through soul. It is the only kind of knowledge which really avails toward the understanding of God. Men cannot be satisfied with an idea, a cold abstraction. They cry out for knowledge of a personal being. Christ is the answer to that cry. Men trust him because they feel that he alone, by virtue of what he is, had power to enter into the knowledge of what God is. They trust him because they see God in him. It is some such thought that Paul must have had in mind when he spoke of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Character Reveals God

If it is character alone that can understand God, it is likewise character alone that can reveal God. No gift of expression, no skill in deeds, is adequate to convey such knowledge. Only character can reveal character, only personality can reveal personality. Christ said: "I am the light of the world." He was so in many senses, but most of all in the spiritual sense. His spiritual light does not come chiefly from his ideas or his utterances or his deeds; it comes from his character. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." It is a profound truth. He embodied

in himself the personal characteristics of God. Looking upon him, considering his personality, men could behold the personal God in a real sense such as would have been possible in no other way. He told them what God was like, but more effectual than everything else was the fact that he lived God before their very eyes and realized God to their human apprehension. Such a character is the light of the world forever, because it is the incarnate illustration of God's nature and God's will.

Reveals Man's Relation to God

Not only was Christ's character a revelation of God's person. It was also a revelation of man's true relation to God. Man cannot please him by professions or by forms of worship or by ceremonial observances of religious law or by any other means than inward righteousness of soul issuing in outward righteousness of conduct. Christ, so to say, taught men the virtue of character. He showed them that it is the supreme thing in religion as in life and that without it everything else is comparatively worthless. Character is the only real evidence of true religious conviction and feeling. It is the natural fruit of these and therefore the best proof of their genuineness. The creation and development of character is the great object and purpose of religion. In the deepest sense, it is religion. This was a lesson which the world had profound need to learn. It is a lesson which the world cannot mistake or forget so long as it

has any true appreciation and remembrance of the character of Christ.

We may learn from Christ also that it is character which is the only true religious teacher. In the matter of vital religious instruction, personality communicates to personality. Theology may teach religious doctrine, but character alone teaches religion. What a wonderful process it is, and how wonderfully it is illustrated in the person of Christ. It is the supreme exhibition of his genius. There is no art like the art of producing and imparting personality, no genius like that which manifests its powers by realizing character in oneself and communicating character to others. It is the process by which Christ reveals God to men. It is the process by which he reveals his own nature and his own mission and his own relation to God and man. It is the process by which he impresses upon the world most powerfully the religious truth which he came to teach and the process by which he has given to that truth its great and abiding influence. It is the process by which he is still transforming human life and bringing it to pass that the will of God shall more and more be done upon earth. His own powers of character he communicates to others and so multiplies evermore the mighty forces which his personality has set in motion.

Character Teaches Religion

Christ's power as an interpreter and revealer of spiritual things reaches to the very limit of

human genius and capacity. It sets him at the very summit of human mind and character. He is, in this spiritual and religious field, the teacher of all teachers, the prophet of all prophets. If we should compare him with the world's greatest seers and mystics and saints and masters of spiritual wisdom or with the other great founders of the world's religions, he would appear greatly superior to them all in intellect, in character, in spiritual insight, in knowledge of the religious nature of man. Any human comparison that might be made would yield to him the first place as a spiritual seer and prophet, as a religious genius, as an inspirer of religious faith and worship. Christ is, indeed, all of this, and it is well for us to know it; but it is impossible for us to rest the case with such considerations. He himself passes calmly by any such claims to human preeminence, as though it were a matter of minor importance, and makes for himself another and unique claim as a specially chosen messenger and delegate of God. No study of Christ can ignore this claim or set it aside as though it did not exist or were to be easily explained away. It is of the very greatest importance to our knowledge and estimate of him and to our understanding of his religious genius that we should take into account the nature and extent of his claims for himself.

Christ's Spiritual Claims

Christ claimed to be especially taught of God. What he knew was not presented as the result

merely of his own thinking and conceiving and religious experience; it was declared to have been given to him by direct communication from God in order that he might impart it to other men. In a sense, all knowledge and all religious faith might be expressed in similar terms—as an inspiration from God; but Christ seems to have had an especially vivid consciousness of direct and immediate communication of truth from divine sources. "My Father hath taught me." "He sent me." Similar language might possibly be used by one who was speaking simply as a human teacher, and has in fact been used by the old Hebrew prophets; but on the lips of Christ, it conveys an implication of claims extraordinary and superhuman. He is in effect claiming for his teaching a divine sanction that is direct and unmistakable. "Ye seek to kill me," he says to the Jews, "a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham." His claim evidently goes beyond that of patriarch or prophet.

Taught of God

Not only does he claim to be directly taught of God. He asserts that he is the Christ, "the anointed one"; he declares himself to be the Son of God. It is difficult to understand these words in any sense which would make them applicable in a lower degree to other men, almost impossible to think that he meant nothing more than that he was the first among many who were divinely anointed, the

The Son of God

greatest among God's human sons. It is most natural to interpret his language as a claim that he was something different from other men in kind, and not alone in degree. The words seem to imply that he assuredly claimed, not only that his teaching had a peculiar divine sanction, but also that he himself had a peculiarly divine nature. What he says of himself seems like an unqualified acceptance of the prophecy of Isaiah, quoted as applicable to him by the angel who announced his birth: "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

In a famous conversation with his disciples, Christ asked them as to men's opinions concerning himself. "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" The various answers that were quoted show a disposition to interpret him in the merely human sense, though still with something of the miraculous attaching to the conception. "Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." He seems to set these conceptions aside as inadequate, with the question, "But who say ye that I am?" Peter answers, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It is an assertion that he was something more than any prophet, however great, something more than any mere man, however holy and exalted. It is an ascription of divine character surpassing any human bounds. This answer Christ approves in terms that seem be-

yond mistake. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." No such claim has ever been made by any other. It would hardly seem as though its meaning could be mistaken.

Christ also makes superhuman claims with reference to his mission and his spiritual powers. To all the suffering children of men, he says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He invites men to seek a living spiritual union with himself. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me." The words are meaningless except as a claim to the possession of spiritual power beyond that of any merely human religious teacher. To much the same effect are the words: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." It is a declaration that, through faith in him, men are not only made spiritually alive, but become themselves the source of spiritual influence.

Superhuman Mission

Christ not only claims divine authority for his teachings and his acts, the divine nature in his person, and divine power in human lives. He

claims to be the one and only medium between God and man. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." There could be nothing broader or more impressive or more emphatic. No one can approach God except by the way which Christ has shown, the way which is himself. No one can understand God except as he understands Christ, who is the embodied truth of God. No one can live the spiritual life except by union with Christ, who is God's very life. Still again, he says: "I am the resurrection, and the life." Without him, none could live. Without him, all would die, never to rise again to the immortal life. Who of the sons of men has ever ventured to make for himself such stupendous claims? No wonder that the Jews, and even his own disciples, were amazed and dumbfounded before such unexampled assertion of divine powers. It was indeed true that never before in the history of the world had man spoken like this man. Never since has there been such utterance. It sets Christ apart from all other men.

The Only Mediator

Christ said to the Jews: "I and the Father are one." It seemed like the culmination of all his astounding claims. So horrified and angered were they that they took up stones to stone him. When Christ asked them significantly for which of his good works they stoned him, they answered fiercely: "For a good work we stone thee not, but for

One with God

blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." They were in no doubt as to the implication of his words. That was indeed what he had actually claimed for himself in their hearing—to be one with God. From their point of view, it surely was blasphemy. To men of their temper and training in religious matters, it was a perfectly natural impulse to seek to abolish such a blasphemer. Their incredulous amazement, if not their vengeful wrath, has been often duplicated in the world since. Their general attitude was justified—except on one supposition —namely, that the apparently blasphemous claim was true. But how should they know? It was indeed difficult to accept such a claim; but there was one consideration which should at least have given them pause—the man himself who stood before them. Face to face with that personality, the charge of blasphemy should have died on their lips, the stones should have fallen from their hands. Even if they could not have believed him, they should have felt the purity and the goodness and the exalted sincerity of the man in whose presence they stood. That was their real sin—not the doubt, but the spiritual blindness which could not recognize a lofty and stainless soul. To all doubt since, Christ's personality is the last answer. If men cannot believe in him, let them at least recognize the immortal greatness of his character and go sadly and regretfully

away to their own place, dropping the stones from their hands.

Power to Win the World

Christ laid claim to a power which was to transcend the limits of his own land and his own day and be felt throughout the world and in all after time. He said to his disciples: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It was a prophecy of his death and the expression of a sublime confidence that through his death he would accomplish all that he had failed to achieve through his earthly life. It was the splendid assurance to his own soul that men would not be able to resist the magnetic power of the divine love and the divine character as these should be made clear and eloquent upon the cross, that they would yield to him then the faith and the homage which they had denied to him while he lived and worked among them. There could not well be a stronger illustration of his own faith in himself and his absolute confidence in the validity of all his claims.

Promise of Holy Spirit

Christ's consciousness of association with the very sources of divine power is evidenced in still another form. In one of his farewell discourses to his disciples, he promised them that there should come into the world after his death the Holy Spirit, who should be their Comforter and who should carry on his work in the hearts of men. He was seeking to console them for his departure.

He had told them of the "many mansions," and had said, "If it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." He had declared that he would come again and receive them unto himself. He had assured them again that having seen him, they had seen the Father. He had told them that whatsoever they should ask in his name that he would do. And then he unfolded to them this new revelation concerning "the Comforter," "the Spirit of Truth," "the Holy Spirit." It was as though he was promising to unseal for them the very fountains of the divine life and power. Calmly assured concerning himself and his own work and his own coming death, he was equally assured concerning the continuance of the divine presence in the world. He had declared that that presence was embodied in him while he continued to live among men. He now declared that when he should pass away, it would come to abide and to work in another form, while he should be going to dwell with God and to do God's service otherwhere.

Still another phase of Christ's conception of his own nature and office is to be seen in his final intercessory prayer for his disciples. It is as though he here took upon himself the function of a great high priest, entering into the holy of holies and pleading there with God for his people. He stands as it were in the conscious presence of God and

Intercessor with God

speaks to him face to face. He is no longer asserting his claims to believing or unbelieving men. He is showing the last and the highest faith in himself by asserting them to the divine majesty itself. He has said before, "I am the Son of God," "I and the Father are one." Now, he says: "Father, glorify me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." It is the absolute assurance of his sonship. He displays a like assurance concerning his own mission to men when he prays: "Sanctify them in the truth." He believed in himself. He believed in his great redeeming mission. He believed that he would be glorified and that his mission would be fulfilled. Thus believing and asserting, he went forward to seal the conviction with his death.

The Claims and the Character

All these superhuman claims of Christ stand for us—as they did for the men of his own time—between two considerations. On the one side, there is the difficulty of believing that one who was man could also be God. On the other side, there is the personality of Christ. Do these claims seem false? Let us not judge until we have considered him. Do they seem incredible? Let us not judge until we have considered him. Do they seem a religious delusion? Let us not judge until we have considered him. In the case of any other, we should undoubtedly dismiss them at once; for no other has shown a personality which measures up

to the awful height of such claims. In the case of Christ, men are at least constrained to acknowledge that if God should manifest himself in human form, this would be he. Here is a character which is not out of harmony with our highest conception of a Son of God. If our conception has risen to this height, it is because he has lived and we have known of him. He himself furnishes the only standard by which such claims as his can be judged. Men have not seen—they have not yet even imagined—a greater personality than Jesus Christ. In their loftiest thoughts of God, they have not gone beyond what they have seen embodied and manifested in him who claimed to be one with the Father.

In considering Christ's genius for religion, it has been inevitable that we should come face to face with his claim to be God as well as man. On the human side, he manifests the very highest genius of the seer and the prophet and the religious teacher. As we follow the workings of that genius, we find ourselves rising higher and ever higher, until we are lifted above the earth and above even the earthly atmosphere and enter into a region where earthly laws and forces no longer prevail. We have passed beyond the bounds of genius, however exalted, and have felt the working of powers which are not to be explained in terms of human faculty and experience. Here, more than in the other fields of genius, we feel most clearly

The Divine Genius

Christ's union of the divine with the human. Here he appears as more than teacher and prophet and revealer, and manifests himself as the Son of God.

When we come face to face with this higher thought of Christ—an idea which we cannot escape—our first feeling may be that these are considerations with which the student of human genius cannot deal. Our next feeling may well be, how tremendous is the weight of such a claim from such a man. We have seen the evidence of his wonderful mind, his marvelous powers of expression, his immense capacity for action, his profound spiritual insight, his exalted personality. We have seen in him that noble sanity and sincerity and simplicity by which the highest genius is ever characterized. How can we conceive that he should be deluded? How can we believe that he should be false? Did he not believe what he claimed? If he did believe it, can it have been otherwise than true? Then we remember how that supreme character matches the highest claims. It seems to justify them. When all else has been said, his personality is the best evidence of his divinity. We ask ourselves, Is not this character worthy of the Son of God? Is not this such an one as the Son of God would assuredly have been if he had come in the flesh?

"We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Christ has lived and worked. Men have studied

his life and character. They have "beheld his glory," and the more they have considered it, they have found it ever the more glorious. It is the glory of the highest manhood, the glory of personality, the glory of self-sacrifice, the glory of achievement, the glory of service, the glory of genius. This men have beheld, and the fact that they have seen it is their ground for judgment. They have found it indeed a "glory as of the only begotten from the Father." It has ever seemed to men "full of grace and truth." Therefore they have believed in him. "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." As men believe in Christ, they believe in his revelation of God. They see in that revelation the great purpose of all his thought, of all his work, of all his genius. What he was and did had that revelation for its object. And that revelation becomes in its turn a new evidence of his divinity. Such a revelation could have come only from the Son who had lain in the bosom of the Father. The image is full of infinite tenderness and of infinite suggestion. Christ had not only heard the message from God's lips. He had lain on God's heart and felt the meaning of its very pulsation. Before such intellect, such utterance, such deeds, such spiritual insight and character, such full and convincing revelation of the Father, men bow the head in faith and worship, echoing the cry of the soldiers at the cross—the cry of the ages—"Truly this was the Son of God."

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